Colonial Furniture in America

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BY

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PREFACE

THE object of the present volume is to furnish the collector, and other persons interested in the subject of American colonial furniture, with a trustworthy handbook on the subject, having especially in mind the natural development of the various styles, and arranging them in such a way as to enable any one at a glance to determine under what general style and date a piece of furniture falls.

The sources of information from which this book has been derived are: examination of inventories and contemporary records, all available newspapers, works on the subjects of furniture, architecture, and interior woodwork by English, French, German, Italian, and American writers, general and commercial histories, books on manners and customs, ancient dictionaries, cabinet-makers' books of design ancient and modern, and examination of specimens of furniture, both colonial and foreign.

The last of these sources is the most important, and New England is particularly rich in examples of the earliest as well as the later furniture, while the South is wofully lacking in any pieces prior to the mahogany period, although

the inventories show that such pieces existed more abundantly there even than in the North.

New England possesses many fine collections, both public and private, and as these collections contain examples from both North and South, we have in many cases used them in illustrating instead of taking specimens still in the South.

In the last few years many pieces of the seventeenth-century furniture have come to light which fully carry out the idea of development insisted on in this volume, but often it has been impossible to obtain pictures of these pieces, the owners fearing the reproducer.

As to the inventories, it must be borne in mind that they are misleading. The dates will always be late for a style, as there is no way of telling how long a piece, when mentioned in the inventories, had been in the possession of the deceased before the inventory was taken, and we believe the tendency has heretofore been to date too late rather than too early. A fairly safe guide to follow is to deduct ten years from the inventory date. Then as to valuations. The inventory valuations are, of course, very low, usually about three fifths to one half of the true value, and if before 1710 account must be taken of the fact that the purchasing power of money was then about five times what it is at present. Thus if a chest is valued at £1 in an inventory of 1680, its true value at that time was from £1 13s. 4d. to £2, and the sum corresponding to this at the present time would be from £8 6s. 8d. to £10.

The method followed in dating the specimens of furni-

ture here shown has been to suggest the time when the style represented was in common use, and no attempt has been made to place the date of any specimen exactly, for only under special circumstances could that be done.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to the various collectors and persons having family pieces, for their universal kindness in allowing him to examine and photograph their furniture, and for the interest they have taken in this work.

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I

INTRODUCTION

THE history of furniture in this country, in England, and in Holland is so closely allied, and so plainly reflects the political and commercial histories of the time, that it would seem necessary, for a proper understanding of the subject, to give this brief outline before taking up the matter in detail.

It is, of course, not contended that the styles of furniture changed suddenly, with each political change, or that a few specimens may not have appeared earlier than the periods here given. Style follows the general law of slow development, and it is attempted here to give only the period when a given style became dominant, and to trace somewhat the reasons for a change.

At the time our history opens James I was on the English throne, and the Dutch for some years had commanded the seas, carrying on a prosperous trade with Spain, Portugal, and the East Indies. Antwerp was the great commercial centre, and was exporting to England household furniture and choice dry-goods; receiving in exchange only crude raw materials, such as wool, lead, and tin, together with beer and cheese. Holland was at this time receiving from Spain and Italy the cane furniture which later came to England, under Charles II. Consequently, the Dutch possessed the best that the world afforded.

In England the furniture was scarce, and unless imported was confined to the turned and wainscot types entirely. In fact, this period is characterized by the beauty of the carving and panelling which appeared in great profusion in the better class of homes, and to which has been given the name Jacobean. In design it was a mixture of the more or less grotesque Elizabethan carving and the Italian classic, which had just been brought to the country from Holland, and it would be worthy of but slight mention in a book on colonial furniture in America, were it not that the carving found its way to this country on many chests, cupboards, and wainscot chairs.

The almost universal wood was oak, which was easily obtainable, growing as it did abundantly in England at that time. Chairs were particularly scarce, there being sometimes but one in a house. This one, as a mark of dignity or respect, was reserved for the master or his guest. Benches called "forms" almost entirely took the place of chairs. In style, the chair was plain and massive, with straight, square legs, and a double brace around the lower part; or it took the form of the turned chair, similarly braced, the latter being the chair of the middle class, and for that reason more common in this country. The upholstered chair was also introduced from Venice, its use denoting a degree of luxury not before attained.

The table before and perhaps during the early part of James's reign was in form long and narrow, placed on cross-bars in the shape of an X, or on legs with heavy underbracing. A little later it somewhat improved in style, and James presented to the Earl of Middlesex a so-called thousand-legged table, which was apparently one of the new styles of furniture of the day.

The furniture reaching this country, at this earliest time, was almost entirely of English origin, except, of course, that imported to New Amsterdam. The settlers brought with them what little furniture they could, probably all of which had been in use in England, or in Holland, where the Pilgrims had taken it, and as more pieces were

needed they were made after the patterns of those which were brought over. As soon, however, as the colonists became permanently settled, and had acquired means to satisfy their tastes, we find them importing from Holland as well as from England.

During the reign of Charles I the character of the furniture improved but little, owing to the unsettled political conditions. The tables, however, increased in size, and often leaves were added, which could be raised or dropped. The thousand-legged table was also enlarged, and came into use as a sort of extension dining-table. Couches now also put in their appearance.

In Holland the Spanish pieces and the leather chair imported from Venice were at this time being developed.

The general use of the chair in England dates from the Commonwealth, and the reason can readily be traced to the democratic tendency of the age; but, owing to the still unsettled state of affairs, little improvement is seen, although the leather chair with brass nails already referred to was imported from Holland, and shows a slight advance in comfort.

With the Restoration (1660) came Continental ideas and styles, French, Italian, and Dutch, and this improvement made itself felt almost immediately in this country in such places as Salem and Boston and generally throughout the South.

A style of chair which had considerable influence both in England and here was the spiral turned chair, doubtless of French origin, which, with its modification, became very popular during this reign. This was an upholstered chair, usually covered with Turkey work or leather, and such chairs are mentioned in large numbers in all inventories. The so-called Flemish cane pieces, with Spanish or scroll feet and carved front braces and backs, also appeared during this reign.

With the Revolution of 1688, which placed William and Mary on the English throne, came a considerable change in the style of furniture which was destined to influence the art for the next hundred

years. This change was due not only to the fact that William naturally brought with him Dutch ideas, but also to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), after which many Huguenots, composed mostly of the artisan class, fled to the Netherlands and England, giving a great stimulus to the trades of those countries. This change, however, does not seem materially to have affected the colonies until about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the style is generally called Queen Anne. During the first part of William and Mary's reign the popularity of the Flemish furniture was at its height; but there was now introduced the cabriole- or bandy-legged furniture with the shell ornamentation, and this style, with many modifications and elaborations, continued down to the revival of the classic forms by Adam, late in the eighteenth century. As it was during this period that the colonies had passed beyond the struggle for the mere necessities of life, and were beautifying their homes with the best from the European markets, we find many examples of cabriole-legged pieces in this country in high-boys, desks, and especially in many designs of chairs. It was also due to the Dutch influence that marquetry was introduced into England about this time; but it did not become very popular there until about a century later. Sideboards are mentioned in England as early as 1553, but they were probably tables without drawers, and it was not until this reign that sideboards with drawers came into use. They were made of oak, carved and panelled in fancy shapes, and often colored. An example of one of these is to be seen at South Kensington Museum. They were similar in character to the chests of drawers and cupboards of the same period, and the inventories show but few to have been in this country. Although we find mention of looking-glasses in the inventories from the very first, yet it was not until about this reign that they came into general use. They were often carved and inlaid with ivory and wood, and sometimes made entirely with glass.

Let us pause here, at the end of the seventeenth century, to consider the furniture which had come to the colonies during that century. Up to 1650 furniture must have been very scarce, and in the earlier inventories the only furniture mentioned was tables, chairs, chests, and bedsteads. As prosperity increased, furniture became very plentiful, and before the new century began the wealthier class about New York and the other seaports had all that the European markets could offer. The South seems to have been particularly well provided with court cupboards, chests, couches, and leather chairs, while in New England chests of drawers, desks, scrutoirs, and Turkey-work chairs were more plentiful. The furniture in the South was largely imported, for the expression "old" is mentioned with all kinds of furniture from the very first, while in New England the low valuations lead us to believe that most of the furniture there was home-made. The high chests of drawers appear first, as might be expected, in the New York records, and last in the South. In New England they seem to have been in common use as early as 1685–90. The reason for this seems to be that New England was in rather close touch with Holland, where this style originated, while the South only traded with England, where these pieces never became very popular. At Philadelphia the records show luxury from the beginning, and as a rule valuations were higher there than elsewhere. The furniture of New Amsterdam seems to have differed from that found in New England and the South in several ways. The furniture mentioned in New Amsterdam shows clearly the influence of the Continental and Eastern markets, mention being made of wicker furniture, East India cabinets, ebony chairs, and India blankets, etc., the reasons for which, probably, were that the Dutch still controlled the East India trade, and, further, that New York was made a harbor for that large class of persons who at that time, like Captain Kidd, were engaged in piracy. Little mention is found of carved oak. There are no court or livery cupboards mentioned in the New York inventories, but nearly every

family had a *kas* or *kasse*, a large linen-cupboard, and this piece of furniture is found nowhere else in this country.

The seventeenth-century furniture is still quite plentifully found in New England and New York, but seems totally to have disappeared from the South, and were it not for the inventories, there would be no indication of its existence there.

This was probably due to the fact that in the South the people were wealthier and could discard the old- for the new-fashioned, while in New England, except in the large seaport towns, there was little wealth, and in New York, although with sufficient wealth to discard what was old-fashioned, family pride and the traditions attaching to the furniture were sufficient to save much of it from destruction.

Many writers on English furniture maintain that the golden age of furniture and interior decoration was during the seventeenth century, and this we believe is true also of this country, where, according to the inventories, the carved and wainscoted chests and cupboards and the Flemish caned chairs seem to have been plentiful before the opening of the eighteenth century.

With the opening of the eighteenth century the heavy oak furniture began to decline in popularity, and in its place came the more graceful bandy-legged pieces. The cupboards were replaced by the high chests of drawers, the oak desk-boxes by scrutoirs of cherry and mahogany of a totally new style, the heavily underbraced tables by the more delicate bandy-legged ones, and the chairs followed the same fashion.

Early in Anne's and even in the last part of William's reign the simple straight cornice used in furniture and over doorways began to give way to the more elaborate form of the swan-neck or broken-arch cornice, which made its appearance in architecture as early as 1700, but was little used in furniture, apparently, earlier than 1730, when it became very popular.

INTRODUCTION

Nothing, perhaps, influenced the furniture of the eighteenth century so much as the introduction of mahogany, the strength of which made possible a quite new method of carving, delicate and lacelike, which reached its perfection in some of Chippendale's models. According to tradition, mahogany, although known since the time of Raleigh, was first made into furniture in England about the year 1720; if this were true, the colonies would have the honor of having discovered its great value for furniture some years before the mother-country, for in the Philadelphia inventories as early as 1708 mahogany is mentioned as made up into furniture, and there are entries at New York which would seem to indicate that there was furniture there made of that wood about fifteen years earlier. The tradition of its introduction into England is, however, faulty; for it is now known that furniture was made occasionally of this wood in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

During the reign of Anne and the first of the Georges the style of furniture remained about the same, all showing more or less the Dutch bandy leg with duck feet, or its modification, the ball-and-claw foot. These pieces were at first, however, rather ponderous and plain, the chairs having heavy underbracing, thus destroying the graceful effect obtained by the cabriole leg.

Some examples of carved mahogany furniture before the time of Chippendale are to be seen in England, which are equal to anything ever made. There is in the Pendleton collection a double chair and side-chairs belonging to this period which there is every reason to believe were carved by Grinling Gibbons, Sir Christopher Wren's famous protégé, as the designs are notably those used by Gibbons, and the workmanship fine enough to be credited to him.

About 1740 cabinet-makers began to publish books of designs of such merit that from this time on to the end of the period we treat of the style is known by the name of the chief designer, and not by the name of the sovereign in whose reign it was introduced.

The reason for this appears to be not only that these cabinet-makers published books of designs, which had not before been done in England, except perhaps in the case of a few architects like Inigo Jones, but also that English furniture now took on a distinctive style, and was imitated in several of the European countries. Before this period little that was original had been produced in England; its architecture and furniture were borrowed at one time from the French, at another time from the Dutch or the Italian school. Prominent in this period was Chambers, an architect and cabinet-maker, and Chippendale, the latter probably having the greatest influence of any one man on the furniture of England and the colonies.

Thomas Chippendale was essentially a carver of wood, and so faithful was he to his art that, with the exception of a few gilt and lacquer pieces, he stuck closely to his profession, working almost exclusively in mahogany. It has often been thought that Chippendale used inlay and marquetry, and so prevalent is this idea that one can hardly take up a catalogue of an auction sale of old-fashioned furniture but he will find Chippendale's name affixed to such pieces. This idea is erroneous. We are unable to find a single instance where he used either inlaying or marquetry; and Mr. Clouston, in his admirable book on the Chippendale period, bears out this statement.

In one sense, originality cannot be claimed for him, as he borrowed his ideas from the Dutch, French, Italian, Chinese, Gothic, and classic models; but by blending these different styles in the most ingenious ways he produced a result which can truly be called original, and which made a style distinctly English. His success lay not only in his beautiful carving, but also in the mechanical construction of his pieces, which was almost faultless, and to which he would sacrifice all else. For that reason many of his pieces still exist, in almost as good a state of preservation as when they left his master hand.

According to Dr. Lyon, Chippendale's individuality does not seem to have come into general notice until after his death; for,

although other cabinet-makers are mentioned in inventories and diaries of the time, no mention of his name can be found.

His book, "The Gentleman's and Cabinet-Maker's Director," was first published in 1754, and passed rapidly through several editions. The third edition, which the writer has examined, was published in 1762. His aims were lofty, as appears from his Introduction: "Of all the arts which are either improved or ornamented by architecture, that of cabinet making is not only the most useful and ornamental but capable of receiving as great assistance from it as any whatever." He seems to have anticipated the many criticisms that were to be heaped upon him, or perhaps he had tasted them already; but so sure was he of his ability that he says: "I am not afraid of the fate an author usually meets with on his first appearance from a set of criticks who are never wanting to show their wit and malice on the performances of others. I shall repay their censures with contempt. Let them unmolested deal out their pointless abuse, and convince the world that they have neither good nature to commend, judgment to correct nor skill to execute what they find fault with."

He was a chair-maker par excellence, and some of the elaborate designs, as, for instance, his ribbon back, were almost beyond comprehension in beauty of line and carving.

He did not, however, confine himself exclusively to such elaborate designs, for many plainer ones are extant undoubtedly from his hands, and we can safely say that the chairs with the carved legs and openwork backs, found so plentifully in this country, show distinctly his influence, and in that sense can be called Chippendale chairs, although probably very few made by him found their way to the colonies.

Chippendale had many imitators both in the colonies and in England. Among the best known are Manwaring, Ince, and Johnson. As a rule these men fell far short of the standards set by their master, especially in point of construction and proportion. This, however,

could hardly be said of Ince, whose excellence of design and workmanship made him a close rival to Chippendale.

Robert and James Adam are next called into existence by the fickle fashion, which in that age, perhaps more than in any other, was tiring of yesterday and eagerly looking for something new. They were really architects, and began in 1773 to publish their architectural plates, which were continued until a third volume was brought out after their death in 1822.

In style theirs was the pure classic of Greece and Italy, where Robert Adam spent some time, fitting himself for his work. This revival of the classic had considerable influence on the architecture of the latter part of George III's reign, and found its way to this country in architecture rather than in furniture. One of the famous colonial architects, MacIntire, was apparently a disciple of this school.

We now come to the second great cabinet-maker of the age, and to a period of almost equal importance with that of the Chippendale. As the latter had influenced the early part of the reign of George III, so Hepplewhite was destined to influence the England of 1780. We say Hepplewhite because, although he and Shearer appeared at about the same time, their designs were so nearly alike that one can hardly but conclude that they were at least in touch with each other, and because, Hepplewhite being the most skilful and original of that school, his name can well be used to denote the period.

In style Hepplewhite's models were more graceful and delicate than Chippendale's; but his chairs were faulty in construction, and he seemed to defy all rules of mechanics.

Before his time the splat always joined the back of the seat, thus giving additional support to the weakest point in the chair; but Hepplewhite not only ignored this, but often cut away the back at this point, thus making a chair which, though wonderfully graceful, was extremely perishable; as Mr. Clouston says in his "Chippendale

Period": "From first to last his work was a protest against the heaviness of Chippendale, and he used every means in his power to make his furniture look even lighter than it was."

The chief characteristic of his chair was the shape of the back, which was either oval, shield, or heart shape. The point in which he chiefly excelled, and from which he became best known in this country, was in the swell- and serpentine-front bureaus and sideboards; these pieces, for delicacy of line and beauty of inlay, have never been excelled.

Thomas Sheraton, the last of the famous English cabinet-makers whose names have come down to us, published his book of designs in 1791, and later other editions with further designs. The book is at least one third occupied with, to the untechnical reader, abstruse directions for a proper understanding of the laws of perspective and kindred topics, which, he says in his Introduction, are very necessary for a cabinet-maker to understand. He refers to Chippendale's designs as "now wholly antiquated, but possessing great merit at the time they were published."

Sheraton seems to have combined, with greater or less success, the inventions of his forerunners, especially Shearer and Hepplewhite. He eschewed the cabriole leg entirely, and his designs show the straight and tapering lines followed by Hepplewhite. He did little carving, relying almost entirely on inlaying, painting, and trimming in brass to relieve what would otherwise be monotonous; and it is evident that he strove to obtain more brilliant effects than had hitherto been seen in England.

His chairs were of simple and good design and were more durable than Hepplewhite's. The large majority of his earlier published designs for chairs are after the fashion of Figure 158. He gives pictures of and directions for making folding beds, tables, and washstands, and remarks that they are very fashionable. His sideboards, almost without exception, follow Shearer's and Hepplewhite's lines,

although he professes great dislike for their work. His favorite leg for such pieces was the slender fluted one set into a rosette where it joins the top, and he ornaments these pieces with elaborate inlaying, often adding brass rails in fancy form "to support candles for the better display of the silver."

In later years his designs became less original and more clumsy, until he finally drifted off into a poor copying of the Empire style.

There is but one more style to note before closing, namely, the Empire style, evidently brought into existence in France by the expedition of Napoleon to Egypt.

The distinctive feature of this style is the use of carved heads and feet of griffins, sphinxes, lions, and mummies. Inlaying was profuse in wood, brass, and ormolu, and some of the pieces, especially the sideboards and desks, are extremely handsome; but, in the main, the style is inferior to those which it replaced. Its influence was, however, widely felt in Europe, and the very friendly feeling of the young American States at this time for everything French gave it wide popularity here, and it makes up a large percentage of the furniture now commonly called colonial.

As the century advanced, the styles became more and more grotesque and extravagant, until they developed into the ponderous and ungainly furniture of two generations ago.

Nothing has been said of the furniture of Louisiana. That section of the country had been settled by the French, who brought with them French fashions of the Louis XV and XVI periods, and of the Empire. These styles were kept pure, and did not, as in the North, become Americanized. Their influence has therefore not been felt outside of the small French colony.

The collecting of antiques seems not to be a fad of the present day only, for in the Boston "Evening Post" for April 8, 1771, this advertisement of an auction appears: "At the house of the late Miss Bessy Walker all of her house furniture some of which is really antique."

II

CHESTS

AS has often been pointed out, chests have been in use for many centuries. One of the first indications of civilization in man is the accumulation of property, and this necessitates a place for storing what has been accumulated. Chests or coffers, therefore, are among man's oldest possessions.

In England, where we shall follow their history a little, the chests of Norman times were huge oak boxes, bound and rebound with iron, and sometimes magnificently wrought. These served as receptacles for valuables in both the churches and castles, and were furnished with strong locks, the mechanism of which often occupied the entire inside of the chest's cover. For many years these chests served for seats and tables, and for trunks when the lord and lady travelled. Some ancient manuscripts show their tops furnished with chess-boards, a player sitting at either end of the chest.

Carving as an art is also very old; it is referred to in Exodus xxxv, 33, as "in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work." Carving was at first employed almost exclusively for the beautifying of cathedrals and churches, for even the castles of kings, up to the time of Henry III, were very bare, and showed nothing in the way of fine woodwork.

During the reign of Henry III (1216–72), however, room-panelling was introduced into England, and the archings and window-

frame designs long used in the churches became the models for wood-carvings used in the castles and manor-houses for many generations. Almost every design found on the chests and cupboards, preserved in the English museums, are those employed in the room-panelling of the period to which the furniture belonged.

What the chests were which came to the American colonies with the first settlers it is now impossible to say. There is occasional mention, in the early inventories, of wainscot chests

Figure 1.

Pine Ship-chest, first quarter seventeenth century.

or great oak chests, but by far the larger number are recorded simply as chests, or old chests, and their valuation is so slight as to lead us to the conclusion that they must have been of very simple design.

Ship-chests or pine boxes were probably brought over by all settlers. Figure 1 shows the ship-chest brought by Elder Brewster, and many hundreds of boxes such as this probably came from Holland and England during the years when the colonies were being settled. An entry appears at Boston, in the items of the estate of a man who died on the ship Castle during his voyage to Massachusetts

in 1638, of "An owld pine chest 5s"; and of two other chests without description, of still more trifling value.

The earliest carved chests found here are decorated with panels carved in arched designs identical with the patterns seen in England on mantelpieces and wall-panellings during Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Without doubt the carved chests that were brought over previous to 1650 served as the models for those made here for a long time, for the writer has identified almost every pattern used on early chests as having been used in England, and there seems to have been no originality shown in the designs employed in this country until after the middle of the seventeenth century.

There are about ten designs that appear repeatedly in the chests, cupboards, and wainscot chairs of the seventeenth century. These are used in many combinations, sometimes eight out of the ten appearing together on the large pieces, and from three to five on the smaller ones. The scroll design, for instance, is often found used in single form for a border, and entwined and doubled for a panel. Once familiar with these designs, a close observer will find furniture belonging to the carved oak period in this country very easy to identify. These designs will be pointed out as they are met with in the specimens to be spoken of later.

A chest, cupboard, or chair is occasionally met with which has carved designs not traceable to England, but showing French or Dutch influence. Almost without exception such pieces will be found to be made of foreign wood, and the designs were not copied here to any extent, as were the familiar English ones.

Figure 2 shows a chest with the characteristic arching and pattern detail used throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Burton Agnes Hall, built in 1601, shows this arched carving on the staircase in the great hall. This chest is constructed in the usual manner; the stiles and rails are joined with mortise and tenon (all woodwork fastened in this way is spoken of as joined), and the panels are fitted

into this frame. The wood is English oak, and the carving exceedingly good, better than on most of the chests made here. The only clew to its date is the design in carving, and it may safely be placed as early as 1650. This chest is in the collection of the Hon. and Mrs. Morgan G. Bulkeley, of Hartford, Connecticut.

Figure 2.

English Oak Chest, about 1650.

Chests following the general form of Figure 2 are found in various sizes, some as large as five feet in length, and varying in height from twenty to thirty inches. The arches are sometimes elaborately carved, sometimes merely indicated by slight tracery, and any and all of the familiar border designs are used to decorate the stiles and rails.

Another early pattern of chest often seen has the panels decorated with geometrical tracings, the centre having the appearance of being diamond shape, octagon, etc. The upper rails in chests of this order are carved in scroll or half-circle patterns, and the stiles have a slight tracery on their edges. One chest made in this way is shown in Figure 3. The tradition which still attaches to it is that its owner, Lady Anne Millington, a daughter of Lord Millington, came

to this country in pursuit of her lover, a British army officer. Failing to find him, she taught school at Greenwich, Connecticut, and married Lieutenant Gershom Lockwood. The chest is said to have been sent to her by her parents in 1660, filled with "half a bushel of

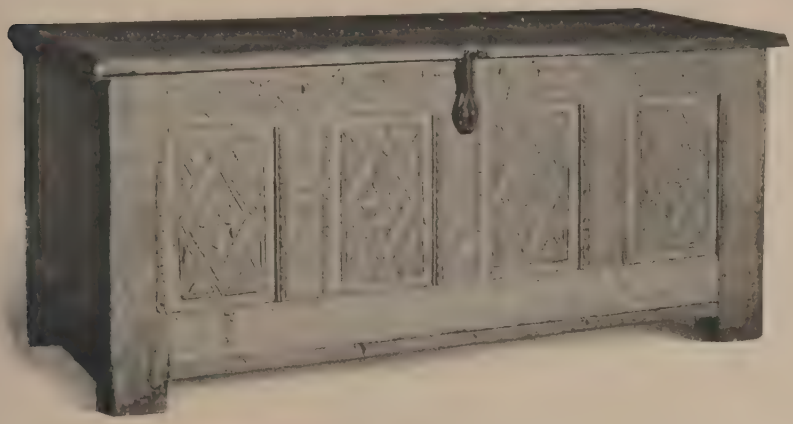


Figure 3.
Carved Oak Chest, about 1660.

guineas and many fine silk dresses." The chest now has a pine top which is not the original. It is in the possession of Professor H. B. Ferris, of New Haven, Connecticut, a lineal descendant of Gershom Lockwood and Lady Anne Millington, as is also the writer.

"A carved chest £1" at Plymouth in 1657, is one of the few references to carving found in the inventories; but as description of any kind is generally lacking, carved chests were probably by no means as scarce as these records would make it appear.

Figure 4 shows a chest of very different order from any met with among the English settlers. This chest is undoubtedly Dutch, and was found by the writer in New York State. The panels show the arching of the English chest shown in Figure 2, but the decoration is inlay or marquetry of a crude kind. Church scenes are on the three front panels; on one end the panel is decorated with plain blocking

in alternate light and dark wood, the blocks about one and one half inches square; the other end has a church, showing side view and steeple, the windows being cut in relief. The stiles are inlaid with three stripes of dark wood, and the capitals are of the same dark wood. The top is panelled with heavy mouldings and decorated with two large inlaid stars. The dentilled cornice which appears beneath the moulding on the cover is about the only suggestion of English chests. It has a large spring lock, and above the lock on the inside appears the inscription "I. N. R. I.," suggesting at once that the chest was made for church use; but the lettering is so small and in so inconspicuous a place, and the chest throughout so crude in design, that we are inclined to believe that the pious inscription was placed above the lock to secure it against thieves. The small panels at the right and left of the front have inlaid the initials L. W. and the date 1616. The W has at some time been substituted, as the panel plainly shows, but not very recently, as this, as well as the L, is badly worm-eaten. The dark wood of the marquetry is walnut, but the mouldings at the bottom and on the top are soft wood, evidently pine; the light wood is a foreign pine. The chest when found was in a most dilapidated condition, worm-eaten throughout; the parts, however, are practically all original, except the feet, which are new.

There is strong indication that in New York, where the Dutch influence was largely felt, the chests were not in general of the carved and panelled varieties in use in the English colonies. The inventories in New York, although they show a large number of chests, make very sparse mention of oak or wainscot, and we have been unable to find any chests surviving among the Dutch families that are of oak carved or panelled. A collector who has made systematic search among the Dutch towns along the Hudson River tells us that only one oak chest was found, and that of a well-known Connecticut pattern. Dutch chests were, so far as we can ascertain, largely made of pine and often painted; the finer ones were of black walnut.

DUTCH MARQUETRY CHEST, 1616.

(*Figure 4.*)

1616

The opinion prevails very generally among students of the subject that almost all the chests belonging to the first half of the seventeenth century were made without drawers. This opinion is largely based upon the fact that the chests without drawers which have come to light are carved in designs known to be early, while chests having drawers are, the majority of them, decorated with the designs of later date, or are on the panelled order, which, generally speaking, is of later origin than carving. The use of drawers, however, was certainly well known in the early part of the seventeenth century, for chests of drawers are mentioned at Plymouth as early as 1642. The first mention we have found in the inventories of a chest with a drawer is at Salem in 1666; after this time the item "chest with a drawer" or "with drawers" is frequently met with, and by far the larger number of chests which have survived are made with one or two drawers.

Figure 5.

Carved Oak Chest with One Drawer, about 1660.

A small chest with a drawer belonging to Mr. Robert T. Smith, of Hartford, is shown in Figure 5. What has been referred to as the

scroll design is used, both single and double, on this chest. The triglyphs which appear on the upper rail and the drawer are familiar ornaments on oak pieces of all kinds; in this chest they are carved and not applied. The drawer is without knobs, for, as it has no rail

Figure 6.

Panelled Chest with One Drawer, 1650–60.

below, it can be easily opened by putting the hands below the moulded edge.

We now come to an order of chest in which the construction is the same as that already met with, excepting that little carving is used as ornamentation, the decoration being supplied with mouldings and split turned pieces. This method of decoration was not approved by architects, and is spoken of in the following words by Pollen: "As the years advanced into the seventeenth century Flemish work became bigger and less refined, diamond-shaped panels were superimposed on square, turned work was split and laid on, drop ornaments were added below tables or from the centre of arches and panels — mere additions and encumbrances to the general structure."

This is the consensus of opinion among those well versed in the rules of construction, but, notwithstanding this fact, some of the cupboards and chests made in this way are very pleasing and decorative.

The Flemish and Dutch cabinet-makers of the Renaissance had made frequent use of panelling and turned ornaments, and such work became popular in England in the early seventeenth century. There is preserved at the South Kensington Museum a mantelpiece removed from a house which was built in London in 1620. This mantelpiece shows the panelling and drop ornaments used in the same way as on the chests and cupboards.

Figure 6 shows a chest owned by the Connecticut Historical Society with decorative effects obtained entirely by panelling and

Figure 7.

Panelled Oak Chest with Two Small Drawers, 1660–70.

turned ornaments. No paint is used on the mouldings or panels. The chest is made of English oak throughout, and was undoubtedly

of English manufacture. The panels retain the arch effect of the old carving, and we therefore place the date of this chest about 1650–60.

Figure 7 shows a panelled chest owned by the Pilgrim Society at Plymouth. The mouldings on the rails are slightly carved, which is not uncommonly the case. What appears to be a long drawer at the bottom of this chest is divided into two short ones, and while this is almost always the appearance caused by the panelling and ornaments, this

Figure 8.

Panelled Chest with Two Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

is the only case of which the writer knows where two small drawers actually occur, and it has been stated that this was never the case.

A two-drawer panelled chest found in the vicinity of Boston, and now belonging to the writer, is shown in Figure 8. Panelled chests, chests of drawers, and cupboards similar to this have been found in considerable numbers in the region of Boston, while they are rarely met with in other parts of New England. This fact seems to indicate that they were made near where they are found. The chest here

shown has the front panelled in quite an elaborate design, the fancy mouldings, except those on the lower drawer, being of pine and originally painted or stained red. The centre of the raised square panels on the chest section are pine, and show the remains of a red stain or paint, probably in imitation of snakewood. The lower drawer has the mouldings of oak, and appears never to have been stained. The raised flat pine surfaces of the chest part and of the upper drawer were painted black. The mouldings on the rails are pine, alternately black and red. The ends of the chest have two oblong panels of pine, which appear to have been stained brownish red. The top is oak, but the back, and the backs and bottoms of the drawers, are pine. The space on the stiles above the large turned ornaments was evidently finished originally with a turned ornament of some description. The feet are new, but restored by measurement of a chest almost identical with this.

There is a panelled chest with three drawers in the Bolles collection which stands about as high as a modern chiffonnier. The chest portion occupies about one third of the space; the drawers which fill the rest are graduated in width from narrow to wide toward the bottom. The panels are formed by mouldings simply, and each drawer is supplied with a round escutcheon and two drop handles of brass. A wide single-arch moulding runs between each drawer, and is mitred into a moulding which follows the stiles. Each end is formed of one large panel. This would seem to be the latest form which the chest took, and the inconvenience of having the chest portion so high must have prevented its extensive use.

The mouldings on the best panelled chests are of cedar, but, as a rule, on the American-made chests they are of pine, and painted or stained red in imitation of cedar or rosetta-wood (an East Indian wood brilliant red in color, heavily grained in black, which was largely used by Spanish and Italian cabinet-makers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). The turned ornaments are seldom found made

of oak, but of pine, beech, and maple, and painted black in imitation of ebony. Panelled chests were made in a great number of designs, following geometrical patterns; they are occasionally found with large ball feet, and when this is the case a heavy outstanding moulding finishes the front and ends of the chest. The foot in other cases is simply the stile prolonged from four to eight inches. The English-made panelled chests are usually made entirely of hard wood, and neither stained nor painted. The rule which seems to have been general in American panelled pieces is that where the mouldings or panels were of hard wood, i.e., oak or cedar, they were left natural; where they were of pine they were painted or stained. This rule may not always have been followed, and if a hard-wood moulding or panel shows evidence of having been colored, it would seem safe to restore according to this evidence.

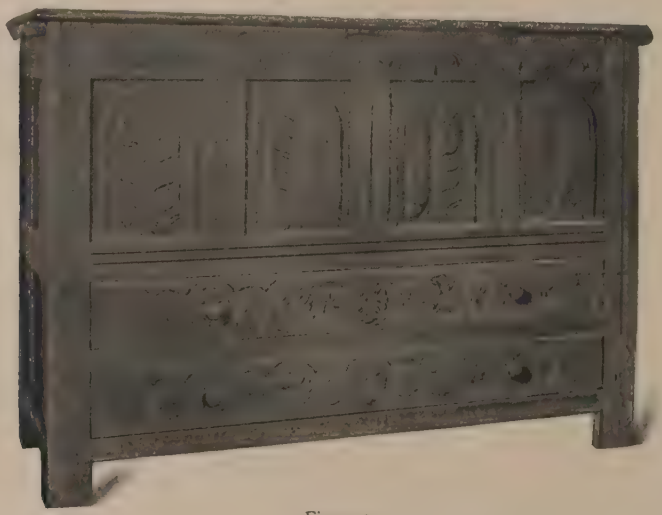


Figure 9.

Carved Oak Chest with Two Drawers, 1660–75.

A handsome carved chest with two drawers, which is in the collection of Mr. Henry W. Erving, of Hartford, Connecticut, is shown

in Figure 9. The upper rail has the half-circle pattern well carved; the panels are arched, and carved with the feather or leaf design often met with. The drawer-fronts show the half-circle of the upper rail completed and alternated with smaller circles. The stiles throughout are finished with groovings simulating mouldings, which are very often found on oak furniture of all kinds belonging to this period. The dimensions of this chest are as follows: length, 50 inches; width, 19¼ inches; height, 36½ inches. The carving indicates that this is an early example of a two-drawer chest.

About the last quarter of the seventeenth century chests were made in large numbers in New England, and some originality was shown in the carved designs.

Figure 10.

Carved and Panelled Chest with Two Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

A two-drawer chest owned by the Connecticut Historical Society is shown in Figure 10. It is of light-colored American oak, the top, bottom, and back being of pine. About fifty chests of this design have been found in Connecticut, some with no drawer, others with one and two. The design, while not wholly new, is a combination of old pat-

terns forming one somewhat original, and is now known as the Connecticut or sunflower pattern. Some of the turned ornaments and mouldings are missing, but enough remain to give a good idea of the appearance of the chest when new.

Figure 11.

Carved Oak Chest with Two Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

The Connecticut Historical Society also owns the chest illustrated in Figure 11, a very nice example of the all-over carving. The stiles and rails show the familiar tulip border, and the panels and drawers the Connecticut sunflower design somewhat conventionalized. This chest has the top, drawers, and back all of oak, somewhat unusual in New-England-made pieces, but that it was made in New England is very surely indicated by its design and the grain and color of the oak. The wooden knob handles are missing. The last two chests described date in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

Figure 12 is a chest found at Hadley, Massachusetts, and now in the Erving collection, known to collectors as the "Hadley" chest, for

many of this design have been found at Hadley or in that neighborhood. The vine pattern in which this chest is carved seems to have been one not used in England, but was undoubtedly an adaptation of the tulip pattern long in use. Its dimensions are as follows: length,

Figure 12.

Carved and Stained Oak Chest with One Drawer, 1690–1710.

42 inches; height, 32½ inches; width, 19 inches. Hadley chests are found with one, two, and three drawers, and, the writer has reason to think, were always stained. The chest here shown has never been tampered with, and is stained with the three colors—red, mulberry or purplish brown, and black, as follows: the top front rail, black; centre rail, brown; bottom rail, black; two end front panels, red; centre panel, brown; drawer-front, very light brown; stiles on front, black; on ends, brown. The ends are panelled but not carved: the rails are stained brown, panels black, and the short stile separating the two upper panels, red.

A two-drawer Hadley chest, also in the Erving collection, is shown in Figure 13. Its dimensions are as follows: height, 44 inches; length, 40¼ inches; width, 18 inches. When found this chest was covered with red paint, but this being removed, the original staining could be plainly seen. Another chest of this kind formerly owned by Mr. Erving, besides several of which he has

Figure 13.
Carved and Stained Chest with Two Drawers, 1690–1710.

known, a one-drawer chest which has not been disturbed, owned by Miss Esther Bidwell, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, and the three-drawer chest shown in Figure 14, all show the staining. This seems evidence enough to warrant one in concluding that the Hadley chests were always finished in this way. As to their date, Miss Bidwell's chest bears the initials M. S., for Martha Sheldon, of Hadley, who married Dr. Ezekiel Porter, of Wethersfield, at just what date is not known, but her daughter, into whose hands it came, was born in 1707.

Figure 14.

Carved and Stained Chest with Three Drawers, 1690–1710.

The chest contained Martha Sheldon's wedding outfit, and dates somewhere near 1700. Mr. Erving's chest marked R. D. belonged to Rebecca Dickenson, of Hadley, who was married in 1724; but it is very likely that the chest was in process of filling with her bridal linen some years previous to this. It seems probable that the Hadley chests date anywhere from 1690 to 1720.

Figure 14 shows a three-drawer Hadley chest, preserved at the Deerfield Museum, which stands 46 inches high and, except for its size and the number of its drawers, is identical with Figures 12 and 13.

Three-drawer chests are rare, but the writer knows of one other in the Hadley pattern owned in Boston, and two of other designs.

Hadley chests, as far as the writer knows, always have pine tops, and the back and the bottom of the chests, as well as the drawer-frames, are also of pine. The ends are panelled but not carved, and the centre front panel almost invariably has initials.

Figure 15.

Carved Oak Chest with One Drawer, last quarter seventeenth century.

A chest found at Belchertown, Massachusetts, and now owned by the writer, is shown in Figure 15. A scrutiny of the design used

on this chest shows it to be the Hadley pattern, a little more carefully executed than usual. The escutcheon which covers the much-worn keyhole is new and partly hides the initials M. E. The arrangement of the panels is reversed, the centre panel showing the design used for the outside panels in the ordinary Hadley chests.

The custom of painting the design on chests and cupboards seems to have prevailed quite extensively late in the seventeenth and early in the eighteenth centuries, perhaps because the decorative effect was more easily and cheaply obtained than with carving or inlay.

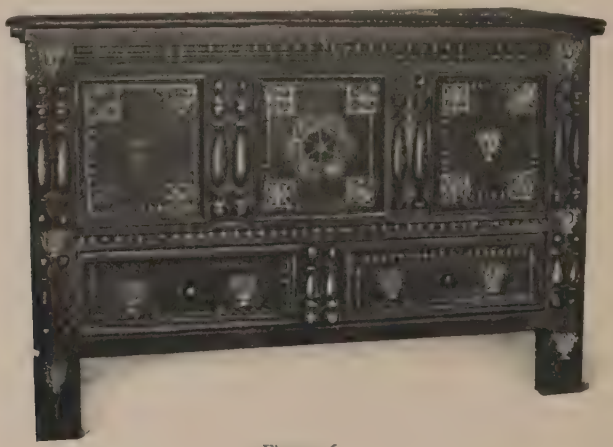


Figure 16.

Painted Chest with One Drawer, about 1700.

A very interesting example of a chest, in the Erving collection, in which the decorative effect is obtained by painting, is shown in Figure 16. This decoration is just as it appeared originally, as the chest has not been restored or tampered with in any way. The fine lacelike pattern suggests inlay rather than carving. This chest was found in Maine.

A two-drawer chest similar to this, belonging to Mr. Walter Hosmer, of Wethersfield, has the panels painted in a design evidently in imitation of carving.

After much study of the inventories the writer is convinced that it is impossible to place the date of a chest in any exact year, for the records covering the century between 1633 and 1733 vary only slightly in the descriptions and valuations given. Practically the only way to determine the date is by the character of the decoration used.

The examples here illustrated represent the better quality of chests in use during the seventeenth century, because, as is natural, only the best of the chests would have been considered worth preserving. Their values, as given in the inventories, vary from one shilling to seventy shillings, the purchasing power of money being at that time about five times what it is to-day. At Plymouth, in 1634, "a great oak chest with lock and key 8s"; Salem, 1644, "4 chests £1," 1673, "a wainscott chest 8s"; Plymouth, 1682, "a wainscot chest £1"; Philadelphia, 1709, "a wainscot chest £1," in the same year, "a black walnut chest £2 5s"; Providence, 1680, "a great chest with a drawer 1s"; New York, 1697, "1 black nutt chest with two black feet £2 10s"; at Yorktown, Virginia, 1674, "2 chests £1 2s," 1675, "3 chests 8s"; and the highest price noted, at New York, 1682, "1 chest with drawers £3 10s." Very many chests both North and South inventoried simply as chests are valued at from one to ten shillings. There is also mention in the inventories of iron-bound chests, one at Salem in 1684 valued at five shillings. The writer knows of two such chests, both of Norwegian pine, in trunk shape with rounded tops; one is bound with wrought-iron bands about four inches wide in the tulip pattern on the stiles of the chest shown in Figure 11, and has initials and the date 1707, also in wrought-iron; the other has finely wrought bands in a Spanish design. Cedar chests are noted occasionally, valued at about thirty shillings; they were probably plain, as no description whatever is given of them.

It may be well to review briefly the facts which we have observed in connection with the examples of chests here described.

First, as to the wood. Most of the English chests are entirely of oak; most of the American-made ones had the top, the back, and the bottoms of both chest and drawers made of pine. No unfailing rule can, however, be given, for the writer has seen chests undoubtedly made abroad which have pine used in their construction, and, on the other hand, American pieces made throughout of American oak.

The chests appear to have been mainly of three kinds: those made with all-over carving; those with carved panels, further decorated with the turned pieces; and the panelled ones. There is every reason to think that the all-over carving is the oldest, but chests of this style continued to be made long after the fashion of adding the turned ornaments became general. The carving on American-made chests is, as a rule, very shallow — what is known as peasant-carving. The English carving is generally more in relief and not so crude in execution. The fine relief-carving such as is seen on Continental furniture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was entirely beyond the powers of the American makers. The size of chests varied from 18 inches in height when without drawers to 48 inches when with three drawers. The length varies from about 30 to 60 inches. They were almost always furnished with a small compartment, or till, at one end near the top. All the oak chests were made in the most substantial manner; the oak forming the frame and the sides of the drawers is about one and a quarter inches in thickness.

A point to remember, in examining pieces for purchase, is that the runners of the drawers were made on the side during the seventeenth century, and not on the bottom, as was the rule later. The side of the drawer was hollowed out in a line nearly in the centre, and a heavy runner affixed to the side of the chest.

There has been much discussion by those interested in the subject as to whether most of the chests were imported or made in this country. This must be decided mainly by an examination of the

woods. The English oak used is of two varieties, live-oak and swamp-oak — the former of a rich brown color and fine-grained; the swamp-oak with a long grain much like the American ash, and tending to flake with the grain, as does the ash. The American white-oak is a rich golden brown with a coarser grain, which in the quarter is so highly figured as to distinguish it at once from the English live-oak. It keeps its rich golden color with age, while the English grows darker without the golden tinge. American oak, however, when exposed to the weather loses much of its golden color, and it is by no means easy to distinguish it from English oak which has been subjected to the same conditions.

Chests continued to be mentioned in the inventories until the last of the eighteenth century; after 1710 they are frequently referred to as "old." They probably ceased to be made to any extent after 1730.

III

CHESTS OF DRAWERS

A FEW chests of drawers are mentioned in the earliest New England records: one at Plymouth in 1642 valued at £1; one in 1643 valued at £2 10s.; one at Salem in 1666 valued at £2 10s.; one at New York in 1669 valued at £1 6s.; and at Philadelphia in 1685 "a chest drawers oake £1"—which are very high valuations when compared with the other articles in the same inventories. The York County, Virginia, records between the years 1633 and 1693 mention only a very small number of chests of drawers, and most of these valued at but eight to ten shillings; but the expression "cupboard of drawers" is used perhaps to describe the same thing, and these are valued higher. In 1674 "a cupboard of drawers £1 10s" is mentioned at Yorktown, Virginia.

These chests of drawers were similar in appearance and workmanship to the chests of this same time. They were generally made of oak trimmed with other woods, carved, panelled, and ornamented with turned pieces. The handles are sometimes wooden knobs and sometimes iron or brass tear-drop handles; variously shaped plates of the metal were fastened to the drawer, and through this passed the heavy wire, which held the drop by being bent at right angles against the inside of the drawers. How early brasses were used it is impossible to say, but there is an item in a New York inventory taken in 1692 of the estate of a storekeeper which mentions "12 doz. wrought escutcheons, 5½ doz. filed and brasse handles." We believe

them to have been in use as early as 1675, for the high chests of drawers dating as early as this had the brass drop handles.

Figure 17.

Carved Oak Chest of Drawers, latter half seventeenth century.

Figure 17 shows a fine example of a carved chest of drawers in the Erving collection. It is made throughout of American oak, the back being panelled and framed. The carving will be recognized as the scroll design used so extensively on chests. The turned ornaments belonging in the centre of the first and fourth drawers are missing, the piece never having been restored. There is also indication of a bracket-shaped piece having been originally added at the centre of the bottom rail, which perhaps bore a date. The back-

ground of the carving on the face of the drawers and the incised moulding at the top show plainly traces of having been painted black. The turned ornaments and feet are also black. The moulding which appears to divide the piece between the second and third drawers does not really do so, although this is often the case in chests of drawers which have four drawers. The dimensions of this piece are as follows: height, 49 inches; width of front, 42 inches; width of end, 21½ inches; size of top, which overhangs, 44½ inches by 22½ inches.

Figure 18.

Panelled Chest of Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

Figure 18 shows a panelled chest of drawers having the outstanding moulding and ball feet. The form of the chest with drawers is suggested by the width of the second drawer. The drawer-fronts are walnut, the main frame oak. Such a piece as this was perhaps described at New York in 1696 as "a chest of draws with balls at the feet £1 16s."

Figure 19 shows a panelled chest of drawers in which the mouldings are of cedar. The feet are simply the continuation of the stiles, but having a foot like that in Figure 17 split and applied.

A panelled chest of drawers owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society is shown in Figure 20. The reader will recognize its marked similarity to the panelled cupboard shown in Figure 62. The

Figure 19.

Panelled and Carved Chest of Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

straight square feet are recent additions, for the outstanding moulding which finishes the front and ends at the bottom indicates the ball foot, and if the piece had originally had straight feet they would have been of the same width as the stiles and a continuation of them. The mouldings on the third drawer have not been properly restored, as the V shape shown at the centre should have been reproduced on the outer edges. The handles are also new; such pieces usually had wooden knob handles.

We now come to the consideration of the high chests of drawers commonly known as high-boys, though this name is never used in the records, and probably was given in derision after their appearance had become grotesque to eyes trained to other fashions.

The introduction of these chests of drawers on high legs or frames marks the time when the character of construction was changed, and from that period the use of oak was gradually dis-

continued, and the massive style seen in the chests and early chests of drawers was no longer followed.

Just when the high chests of drawers came into fashion cannot be determined exactly. The only records which could show this are the inventories, and they cannot be depended upon for placing the date when a new style came into use, for an article may have been in use for a number of years before it was spoken of in a will or inventory. Ten years may safely be deducted from the first inventory mention to obtain the date when the fashion changed. Such a radical change as that from the low oaken chest of drawers to chests of drawers on high frames would seem to call for special mention in recording them, but this is seldom the case. There are, however, two new expressions used in connection with the chests of drawers which indicate that a change had taken place. The first of these is "a chest of drawers on a frame," first met with in New York in 1689, the cost price being given as £4 16s. The second expression referred to is "chest of drawers and table." As both chests of drawers and tables had very frequently been mentioned separately up to the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the very common use of the expression "chest of drawers and table" as one item denotes that they bore some relation to each other, which had not previously been the case. There can be no doubt that a "chest of drawers and table" were a high chest of drawers and dressing-table, or, in other words, a high-boy and a low-boy. In the New York records the expression "chest of drawers and table" does not occur as one item, but during the last quarter of the seventeenth century many of the chests of drawers inventoried are immediately preceded or followed by a table, and when the wood of which the chest is made is mentioned, the table is invariably the same wood. The first mention of this kind is in the inventory of Dom Nicolas Van Rensselaer, January 16, 1678, in which a chest of drawers of nutwood, followed by a table of the same wood, are valued at 60 guilders (about £5 in English money).

Figure 20.

Panelled Chest of Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

Another entry in 1686 is "a wallnut table £1, 15s, a chest of drawers wallnut £3." The facts here shown and the high valuations indicate that these items refer to high chests of drawers and dressing-tables. The first mention of the chest of drawers and table is at Philadelphia in 1684: "chest of drawers and table £8." Both of these values are much above those of any chests of drawers previously mentioned, and this fact further indicates the change of style. In view of these facts we have no hesitation in naming the year 1675 as the date when the high chests of drawers were known in the colonies.

The frames upon which these chests of drawers were raised are of two varieties. The first has six turned legs, four in front and two in back, joined by heavy stretchers near the floor. The second has four cabriole or bandy legs without stretchers or bracing. There has been some question as to which style was the older, but the one fact that the first variety has the heavy bracing characteristic of all seventeenth-century furniture points very forcibly to the conclusion that this heavy frame appeared before the lighter one. The six-legged frames of the chests of drawers, and the four-legged frames with the bracings crossing at the centre of the accompanying dressing-tables, are Italian in style, for there are many examples of Italian cabinets, tables, and chairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which show this bracing. The cabriole leg seems to have originated in Holland.

The relation of the chest of drawers on a frame to the chest with drawers of the period preceding is very interesting to note. That one was developed from the other there are many reasons for believing, though the frame was an entirely new feature, so far as we know, never suggested in any chest. The three-drawer chest in the Bolles collection, which is described on page 23, probably represents the latest development of the chest with drawers. A comparison of this with a chest of drawers on a frame, also in the Bolles collection, shows

them to have many points in common. This chest of drawers on a frame has five drawers on side runners in the upper part, each surrounded with the wide moulding, as are the drawers in the chest; the ends are panelled with a long panel also like the chest, and the handles are the brass drops also on that chest. The frame is quite low, and the chest of drawers sets into it, and is supported by a heavy outstanding moulding. The frame contains two narrow drawers which have one runner on the side and one on the bottom. These small drawers are surrounded with a moulding like that of the small drawers in the chest shown in Figure 7. The legs, six in number, are turned after the general fashion of those shown in Figures 21 and 22, and the stretchers are also similar. This chest of drawers, when found, showed the presence of black and red paint on drawer-fronts and mouldings, another point of resemblance to the chests. The writer is convinced that this is the link between the chest of drawers and the chest of drawers on a frame which superseded it.

As the high chest of drawers developed it gradually lost its points of resemblance to the chest. The mouldings, while retaining the general form, were made narrower, the drawers did not run on side runners, and the ends were not panelled. The transition piece above described is the only one of its kind which is known to the writer, and practically the oldest form of high chests of drawers is shown in Figure 21, an exceedingly interesting specimen from the Erving collection of a chest of drawers decorated with fine Dutch marquetry, which was found at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The framework of this piece is oak, except the legs and stretchers, which are maple; and this, coupled with the fact that the marquetry is of a very high order, makes sure its Holland origin, Holland during the last half of the seventeenth century having been specially noted for fine marquetry of this kind. The beautifully executed designs of birds and flowers in colors extend not only around the sides but on the top. The moulding about the drawers is what we shall designate as single-

DUTCH MARQUETRY HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS, LAST QUARTER SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

(*Figure 21.*)

arch moulding, which, as has been said, is like that found on panelled chests, except that it is somewhat narrower. The narrow cornice finishing the top, the single drawer in the table or frame

Figure 22.

High Chest of Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

part, the simple arch between the legs, and the drop brasses, are all characteristic of the earliest high chests of drawers. The stretchers are new and incorrect; they should invariably follow the curve with which the frame is finished. The brasses on this piece, though not the original, were taken from a very early high chest of drawers. The dimensions of this piece are as follows: total height, 59 inches;

upper part, 31 inches; lower part, 28 inches; width of upper part, 38 inches; width of lower part, 40 inches; depth, 23 inches.

Figure 22, also from the Erving collection, is a sycamore chest of drawers probably of American manufacture. The stretchers in this piece are original, as are also the fine drop handles. The mouldings, cornice, arrangement of drawers, and arches between the legs are identical with the imported piece above described. We believe these chests of drawers to be such as were referred to in the inventories already quoted dated 1678 and 1684. The dimensions of this piece are as follows: total height, 65 inches; upper part, 35½ inches; lower part, 29½ inches; width of upper part, 36¼ inches; lower part, 39 inches; depth, 21 inches.

Figure 23.

Walnut Dressing-table (not restored), about 1700.

A dressing-table or low-boy having the single-arch moulding and the legs of an early pattern is shown in Figure 23. The arches between the legs show the double ogee curve instead of the single arch. Dressing-tables of this kind are almost always of walnut veneered on white wood or pine, and are exceedingly well made. The top is veneered in four rectangular sections, fitted to show the grain to the best advantage, bordered with a strip two inches in width

Figure 24.

High Chest of Drawers, 1710–20.

(Stretchers new and incorrect.)

showing the straight grain; between this border and the inside is a strip an inch wide in feathering or herring-bone, formed by joining two half-inch strips, the grain running at right angles. The fronts of the drawers are also finished with the feathering. The legs and stretchers are often made of maple or beech. This dressing-table has not been restored, as will readily be seen, and the drops below the arches and the little turned ornament at the centre of the bracing where the stretchers cross are missing. The narrow bead-moulding which borders the arches of the frame is always found on the chests of drawers and dressing-tables of the turned-legged variety.

Figure 24 shows a chest of drawers of white wood belonging to Mr. William Meggat, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, of somewhat later date than Figures 21 and 22. This is indicated in several ways. First, the single-arch moulding is divided, thus forming a double arch, which for convenience we shall speak of as a double moulding. The cornice at the top is wider, and a moulding containing a drawer has been added below it. The table part has three drawers, and the simple arch between the legs has become the double ogee in form. The drop handles are replaced by an early form of bail handle, the plates of which, if compared with the plates on Figure 22, will show them to have been developed from brasses of that kind. These bail handles are fastened, like the drops, with wires, which pass through the plate and are bent against the inside of the drawer. The stretchers are new and should conform to the curves of the frame.

A dressing-table belonging to the writer, differing from Figure 23 only in that it has the double moulding, is shown in Figure 25. This still retains the drop handles, and denotes the fact that the drop was used with the double moulding.

Figure 26 shows a chest of drawers in the author's possession which does not differ materially from that shown in Figure 24, the principal difference being that the table part is considerably deeper and contains five instead of three drawers. The dimensions are as

follows: total height, 69½ inches; upper part, 32 inches; lower part, 37½ inches; width of upper part, 36 inches; width of lower part, 38½ inches. The stretcher across the back, which is new, should be straight.

Figure 25.

Walnut Dressing-table, about 1710.

The chests of drawers with turned legs were made of many varieties of wood, most often of walnut and white wood; they were also japanned, that is, finished with several coats of specially prepared varnish, overlaid with figures of flowers and animals in bright colors, silver, and gold. One finished in this way belongs to Mr. Walter Hosmer. The frames of both the chests of drawers and dressing-tables sometimes had five instead of six legs, thus bringing one in the centre of the front. Dressing-tables are also occasionally found with a fifth foot where the stretchers cross. The dressing-tables sometimes

Figure 26.

High Chest of Drawers, 1710–20.

had stone or slate tops; five of these are mentioned at Boston between the years 1693 and 1719, valued at about £1. They are now very scarce, only two being known to the writer, one belonging to the Bolles collection, the other to Mr. William G. Boardman, of Hartford, Connecticut. The slate top in the one belonging to Mr. Boardman is set into a border of marquetry about five inches in width. Except for the top, this dressing-table is very similar to Figure 25. The handles are the hollow drops, and these, as well as the outlines of the drawers, appear also on the back.

Some of the inventory items which probably refer to the styles so far considered are as follows: Philadelphia, 1684, "a chest of drawers and table £8"; New York, 1685, "a chest of drawers black walnut £3"; 1705, "a fine chest of drawers of walnut and olive wood £15"; Boston, 1709, "a chest of drawers and table £4"; 1711, "chest of drawers and table £8"; 1715, "a black Japanned chest of drawers, table and dressing boxes £3 15s"; Philadelphia, 1720, "a pair chest of drawers and table walnut £6," "a cedar chest of drawers and table £9 10s," "chest of drawers and slate table £5." The Virginia records before 1700 do not indicate in any definite way that the high chests of drawers were in use there; but the writer knows of two of the turned-legged dressing-tables which were found in the South, and the accompanying high chests of drawers were probably known to some extent. The first inventory entry which seems to point with any certainty to such pieces is at Yorktown in 1711: "One chest of draws and a small table with a draw, of French walnut £3."

The types of handles which were used on the chests of drawers with turned legs are shown in Figure 27. The first, known as drop handles, had the drops both solid and hollow, the latter having the appearance of being cut in two. The plates and escutcheons are in many shapes, some being round, with the edges pierced, others shield shape. These drop brasses we will call handles of the First Period. The second style has a bail handle fastened with bent wires, and the plates

are generally the shape of those shown, but not always engraved. The drop handle is the older, and is sometimes found on chests in both iron and brass. These brasses with bail handles held by bent wire we will call handles of the Second Period.

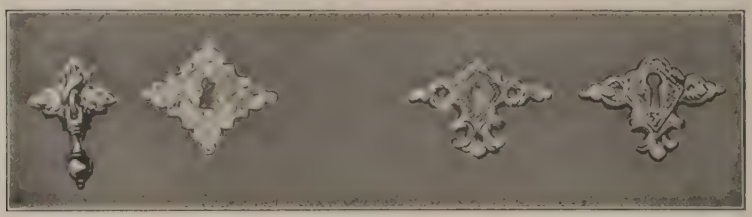


Figure 27.

Handles and Escutcheons, First and Second Periods, 1675–1720.

The earliest specimens of the cabriole-legged high chests of drawers have many points in common with the six-legged variety. The arrangement of drawers in both the upper and lower part is sometimes like that in Figure 24. The writer has, however, never heard of a piece which had but a single drawer in the table part. The double-arch moulding and the etched brass handles, like the second variety shown in Figure 27, are sometimes used, and the curves at the bottom of the frame are finished with a fine bead-moulding. The wood, also, is quite often walnut, and sometimes veneered, as in the dressing-tables described above. There was, however, as far as the writer can ascertain, no bandy-legged high-boy having the single-arch moulding and the drop brasses, which were survivals of the period preceding that which developed the high chests of drawers; and this fact, together with that already alluded to as to the construction of the frame, make it appear more than likely that the six-legged chests of drawers somewhat preceded the cabriole ones.

Figure 28 shows a maple chest of drawers found in Connecticut and belonging to the writer, which is literally a chest of drawers on frame, there being no drawers in the table part. It has marks of an early

date in that the cornice at the top is narrow and has two short drawers below it; the handles are similar to those on Figure 26, and are fastened with wires; the drawers, however, instead of having the

Figure 28.

Cabriole-legged High Chest of Drawers, 1710–20.

double mouldings about them, are overlapping, which was the style next following the heavy mouldings, and the double moulding, apparently without reason, appears on the top of the sides of the drawers. There is no way of determining how early a piece of this kind was made, but that it could have been made as early as 1710 is certain.

A dressing-table of walnut veneered on white wood in much the same way as that shown in Figure 25, is shown in Figure 29. The moulding is of a kind which occurs on both the turned-legged and the cabriole-legged chests of drawers, and is formed by bordering an applied

Figure 29.

Walnut and Inlay Cabriole-legged Dressing-table, 1720–30.

strip about half an inch wide with a bead-moulding. This is sometimes known as a canal-moulding. The opinion is held by many that it is this moulding which was used on the mahogany block-front pieces; but a careful examination of the latter shows that while the effect obtained is much the same, the fact is that the extra strip is applied to the frame when the canal-moulding is used, and no such strip is used on the block-front pieces. On the block-front pieces the narrow rail running between the drawers when bordered with the bead-moulding gives much this same effect, but at the ends of the drawers, where the beading appears only single, the difference is plainly shown. The handles belonging to this dressing-table are small, of the willow pattern, etched and fastened with screw-bolts. This beautiful little piece was found in Vermont, and belongs to Mr. Meggat.

The common form of the flat-topped bandy-legged high-boy is

Figure 30.

Cabriole-legged High Chest of Drawers with Steps
for China, about 1730.

made of cherry, maple, or walnut, and is taller by six or eight inches than the chests of drawers hitherto shown. The upper and lower parts are made separate, the upper fitting into the lower and held firm by a moulding. The chest of drawers proper has usually four drawers, graduating in size from seven to four inches in width; the section above the fourth drawer is divided commonly into five drawers, a deep one ornamented with the rising sun, with the space each side of this equally divided into two small drawers. The table part has a drawer running all the way across the top, and under this three deep drawers, the centre one also having the rising sun. The handles are medium-sized willow pattern fastened with screw-bolts. The large majority of low-boys offered for sale are the lower or table part of high-boys, and can be distinguished from the dressing-table proper by their height and the much more substantial make of the leg. The genuine low-boy seldom measures over 34 inches in height; the high-boy tables average about 38 inches. The little low-boys are very light and graceful in appearance, and to the trained eye easily distinguished from the pieces made by supplying a top to the high-boy table. It may also be added that when they are thus separated the chest of drawers is often finished with feet and offered for sale as a colonial bureau.

Figure 30 shows a conventional flat-top high-boy. The steps, such as are shown on top of this piece, were often used to display china when the chest of drawers was used in the dining- or living-room. A Boston inventory of 1713 mentions earthenware on top of the chest of drawers.

A high chest of drawers of walnut which combines to a very unusual degree the characteristics of different periods is shown in Figure 31 (frontispiece). The features which point to its early date are the double-arch moulding, the cornice drawer, and the two short drawers just beneath, while the blocking of the drawers, the fluting at the corners, and the ball-and-claw feet are features which would make it

appear to be of a much later date. The wooden handles are, of course, recent additions, and the brass binding about the keyholes was probably added at the same time. The loss of the original handles removes one of the most valuable indications of its date. One escutcheon, however, remains. It is a small plain plate, and the original bolt-holes show the handles to have been about two inches in width. It is quite possible that such a piece as this could have been made very late to satisfy the taste of some individual without regard to the combination of early and late characteristics, but the burden of evidence seems to be thrown on the side of an earlier date than has ever been associated with block-front pieces, and our opinion is that this very interesting chest of drawers, which is in the collection of Mr. C. L. Pendleton, of Providence, was made before the year 1750.

Somewhere between the years 1710 and 1730 the flat top was superseded by the swan-neck or broken-arch cornice. This does not mean that after this time no flat tops were made; being much more simple to make, they probably continued to be made for years. We name these dates because the broken arch is never found with either of the early forms of moulding or with handles fastened with wires, both of which were probably used as late as 1710; and 1730, because at this time the broken arch was freely used in architectural designs in England and the colonies, although previous to this time it had been plainly suggested on some of the wainscot pieces. (See Figures 91 and 167.) There is at Wethersfield, Connecticut, a house which belonged to Dr. Ezekiel Porter, which was furnished about the year 1730; the sleeping-rooms were each supplied with a chest of drawers and a dressing-table, and all of the five chests of drawers have the broken-arch cornice.

One of these chests of drawers, which now belongs to Miss Esther Bidwell, is shown in Figure 32. The wood is cherry, and the construction exactly like its flat-top predecessor, except that the

curved moulding leaves space for but one narrow drawer each side of the square drawer at the top. The torch ornaments are characteristic of this finish. The wooden drops, which were probably the survival

Figure 32.
Scroll-top High Chest of Drawers, 1730–40.

of the two inside legs on the six-legged form of the high chests of drawers, and which appear on the flat-top pieces, are done away. The brass handles, similar in form to those on Figure 30, are somewhat larger, and this increase in the size of the handles is an indica-

tion of a later date. The willow brasses of the earliest patterns are very small, measuring about two inches in length by one and a quarter inches in width, while those used on pieces made after 1760 are often as large as five inches in length by three inches in width.

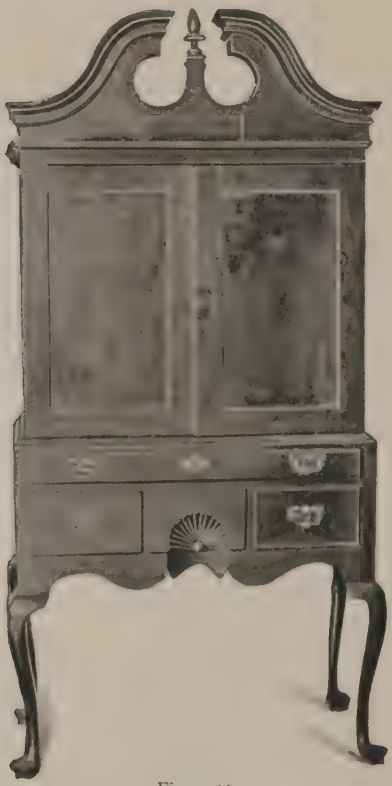


Figure 33.

Dutch Cupboard, 1730–40.

Figure 33 shows a Dutch cupboard, also owned by Miss Bidwell, having the chest of drawers replaced by a cupboard which is furnished with shelves. One small drawer may be seen in the cornice just below the centre ornament. These cupboard-top pieces are not at all common.

Figure 34 is a dressing-table belonging to one of the high chests owned by Miss Bidwell. It shows almost the lines of the cupboard just spoken of and may have belonged with it. The early dressing-tables had but three drawers, as the high curve at the

Figure 34.
Dressing-table, 1730–40.

centre only admitted of one narrow drawer above it. The common form of dressing-table made after about 1730 is shown in this illustration. The high curve at the centre is omitted and a long drawer added across the top. The centre drawer was not always square or oblong, but sometimes rounded at the top and sometimes arched at both top and bottom.

As the century advanced the elaborateness with which the chests of drawers and dressing-tables were made increased. The legs were carved with a shell at the knee, and a ball-and-claw or web foot was used. The centre drawer dropped the rising sun and was carved in various ways, and the corners were often ornamented with a fluted half-column.

The wooden drops, as we have seen, were not used to any extent after the scroll top was added, and the simple bracket

curve which distinguished the early styles was replaced by many ingenious patterns.

Figure 35 shows one of these more elaborate dressing-tables, with fluted columns and shell carving, belonging to Mr. Meggat.

Figure 35.
Dressing-table, 1760–70.

The rail just below the top in the most ornate dressing-tables was carved in rococo or Chinese styles.

The dressing-tables were usually furnished with dressing-boxes having a mirror attached. One is mentioned in Boston in 1715, in connection with a dressing-table, as "black japanned table and dressing-box £1 5s." It is a strange fact that although these are mentioned so frequently as to lead us to suppose that they must have been very common, only a very few of those belonging to pieces previous to 1780 can now be found.

One of these dressing-boxes, beautifully japanned, is shown in Figure 36. It dates from 1760 to 1780.

Figure 37 shows a double chest of drawers, sometimes called a chest on chest, which belongs to Mr. Meggat. The cornice is almost

Figure 37.

Double Chest of Drawers, about 1740.

identical with that of the high-boy shown in Figure 32. The wood is cherry and the drawers overlap. The ball-and-claw feet and the handles are new, the feet originally having been ogee bracket feet. The cornice with which this piece is finished indicates a rather early

Figure 36.

Japanned Dressing-box, 1760–80.

date, for this feature, like most details of feet, handles, etc., was gradually elaborated, and few arch cornices of a later date than 1750 are found which are not finished where they break more or less elaborately with a carved rosette or similar design. In 1768 at New York a mahogany fluted double chest of drawers was advertised, and in 1769 chests on chests were offered.

Figure 38 shows a double chest of later date than the preceding, as shown by the beading about the drawers, the serpentine form of the lower portion, the fluted corner columns, the carving on the square drawer, and the finish of the cornice. The rosette handles

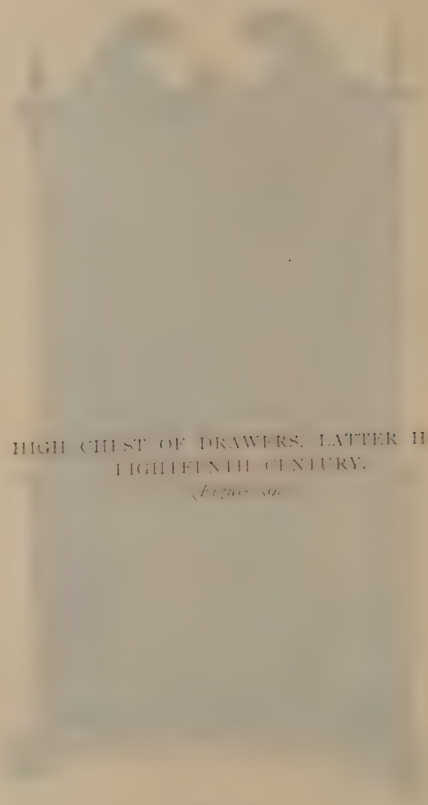
seem too late a style to go with this piece, but are undoubtedly the only handles it has ever had, as it has never been restored, and there is no mark whatever of other handles; but as chests of drawers were

Figure 38.

Double Chest of Drawers, 1760–80.

(Handles probably added later.)

made and used for years without handles, it may be that this chest did not have the handles added for some years after it was made. The fact that they are not put on perfectly evenly may indicate that they were not put on by the maker. The centre ornament at the top is missing.



HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS, LATTER HALF
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
(Figure 39.)

A very elaborate chest of drawers, which probably represents the extreme to which this style was developed, is shown in Figure 39. Every detail is elaborated, though the form and arrangement of the simpler high-boy is followed. The carving is the best and the chest the very finest of its kind. Chests of drawers of this pattern are found almost altogether in the South, in Virginia and Pennsylvania especially, and are almost invariably made of walnut with overlapping drawers. There are five of these elaborate chests of drawers in the Pendleton collection at Providence, Rhode Island, differing very slightly in design and detail. In the same collection are also dressing-tables carved in like manner. This chest of drawers belongs to Mr. Meggat.

Figure 40.

Handles, Third and Fourth Periods, dating 1710–60.

The handles shown in Figure 40 represent the principal styles used on high chests of drawers after 1710. They were fastened with small screw-bolts. The first two appear usually before 1720, the last two from that time until the latest form of willow brasses, shown in Figure 39.

BUREAUS

As such pieces as these about to be described have so commonly been called bureaus, we will, for convenience, use that name here.

There is some indication that the low chests of drawers, or bureaus, existed to some extent while the high chests of drawers were still in general use. Whether they were at that time called bureaus is a mooted question, and the reader is referred to the chapter on Desks

for discussion of the origin and early use of the word. Examples of low chests of drawers which could date previous to 1750 are now exceedingly rare; the writer has heard of but two which would answer the requirements of such an early date. These were both of walnut with plain bracket feet, overlap drawers, and engraved brasses

Figure 41.
Mahogany Low Chest of Drawers, 1760–80.

of an early willow pattern; but the bureaus which have survived to any extent are largely of mahogany, and certainly date in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Those with swell or serpentine fronts were adopted from the French, who called them commodes. Chippendale published designs for them, and probably introduced them to England. Hepplewhite and Shearer published numerous designs in 1788–89 for serpentine-front chests of drawers, and called them dressing-chests and French commode dressing-chests.

The characteristics of the earlier form of chests of drawers have

been fully discussed previously, and it only remains to give illustrations of some of the varieties of bureaus which are now commonly found.

Figure 41 shows a mahogany serpentine bureau with ball-and-claw feet and a late form of willow handles. The frame about the drawers has the narrow bead-moulding common to such pieces.

Figure 42.

Low Chest of Drawers, about 1770–80.

Figure 42 shows a serpentine bureau with ogee bracket feet, and with corners finished with a fluted column. The drawers are finished in the same way as the above. The date of this piece cannot safely be placed earlier than 1770.

Figure 43 shows a block-front bureau belonging to Mr. W. S. Schutz, of Hartford, in which the drawers are finished with a narrow bead-moulding, and the handles, which are the original, show that the piece cannot date earlier than 1770–80. The feet, it will be noticed, have a somewhat unusually deep curve.

Figure 43.

Block-front Low Chest of Drawers, about 1780.

Figure 44.

Block-front Low Chest of Drawers, about 1780.

Figure 44 shows a block-front bureau with the shell carving, belonging to Mr. Meggat. The frame about the drawers is finished with the usual fine beading which, as we have seen before, many mistake for the canal-moulding. The three drawers are rarely met with, such bureaus generally having four drawers. The feet are particularly slender and graceful, and, with the heavy upper moulding, bring the height of the piece about up to that of the four-drawer bureau. The remains of the original brasses will be seen on the drawers.

Figure 45.

Swell-front Low Chest of Drawers, 1780–1800.

Figure 45 shows a swell-front bureau with the foot used on the French commodes and usually known as the French foot. Each drawer is inlaid about an inch and a half from the edge with a narrow band of holly, and the edge of the top and the frame at the bottom have a border about three quarters of an inch wide of fancy inlay. Bureaus of this kind were very common in this country, both plain and inlaid, and almost invariably have the oval brasses. They date from 1780–1800.

Figure 46 shows an elaborate swell-front bureau of mahogany with square and oval panels of satinwood, each outlined with a fine border of inlay of holly, rosewood, and ebony. This represents the

Figure 46.

Mahogany and Satinwood Low Chest of Drawers, 1780–90.

(Brasses new.)

handsomest and best-made bureau of its time — 1780–90. The handles are not original. This piece belongs to Mrs. Alexander Forman, of Brooklyn.

Figure 47 shows a mahogany bureau in the Sheraton style, as shown by the fluted columns and feet. The wide drawer at the top has the appearance of being a "bureau drawer" fitted with a spring and quadrant for writing purposes; this is not, however, the case, but this bureau was probably modelled after one having such a drawer. The handles are original, and the date of the bureau is about 1790.

Figure 48 shows a bureau of late Sheraton or early Empire design. It is made of mahogany with a little inlay in holly.

Figure 49 shows an Empire bureau found in Virginia, having the three lower drawers swelled and the short drawers at the top straight. This form of bureau was largely used in the South, and similar ones

Figure 47.

Sheraton Low Chest of Drawers, about 1790.

are sometimes found with turned feet. The handles, though old, are not the original for this piece, which should have had rosette handles of some sort. It dates about 1800–10.

Figure 50 shows the conventional tall Empire bureau with the proper rosette and ring handles. The columns show the acanthus-leaf and pineapple so generally used on all Empire furniture. All these bureaus were of fine mahogany, usually veneered.

As bureaus are so commonly associated with mahogany, it will perhaps be well to say something of the history of the use of that wood for furniture in general. The tradition of its introduction into

England by Sir Walter Raleigh, in 1595, is quite generally accepted, and at the same time it is as generally believed that it was not used there to any extent until about 1720. It is not likely that the century which divides its discovery from its popular use was absolutely igno-

Figure 48.
Late Sheraton Low Chest of Drawers, about 1800.

rant of it, and some pieces are now known to have been made of mahogany in England previous to 1700. As far as this country is concerned, there is no indication whatever that it was known or used previous to 1700; none of the furniture, such as chairs, tables, or chests of drawers, which were made at this time, were made of mahogany, and there is no mention in the inventories or contemporary documents of any kind that the writer has been able to find of ma-

hogany previous to 1700. At Philadelphia, in 1694, the inventory of a cabinet-maker named John Fellows contained the following list of material in a shop: "pyne loggs, walnutt loggs, pyne boards, walnutt planks, walnutt scantling, oak boards and cedar boards, one

Figure 49.

Empire Bureau, 1800–10.

(Handles new.)

case of drawers, partlie made, stuff for a side table partlie made, stuff partlie wrought for a hall table, a parcel of brass work for drawers, four sutes of locks for chests of drawers, three dressing box locks"; but in 1720 Joseph Waite, also of Philadelphia, had in his shop "a chest of mahogany drawers unfinished." Previous to this there is mention of a "broaken mahogany skreen" in the inventory of John Jones, in 1708, at Philadelphia, valued at two

shillings. If we conclude, then, that the use of mahogany for furniture in this country was contemporaneous with the opening of the eighteenth century, we shall certainly place it early enough, and we are equally safe in concluding that it was not in general use earlier

Figure 50.

Empire Bureau, 1810–20.

than 1720–30. The Boston "Evening Post" throughout the year 1741 advertises mahogany boards in large quantities, and after this time the newspapers and inventories frequently mention mahogany tables, chairs, and desks.

It may be well, while on this subject, to speak here of the difference between the old mahogany and the new. There are in the market to-day in commonest use two kinds of mahogany. One, from Mexico, is quite a soft wood, and light in color, which does not darken with age, and consequently must be stained. It weighs but

about two and a half pounds to a square foot an inch in thickness, while West Indian mahogany weighs about six pounds. The other kind of mahogany is from Honduras, and is even softer than the Mexican, with a much coarser grain. It is therefore often possible to tell by the weight of a piece of furniture whether it is old or new, and this is particularly true in respect to chairs.

The best mahogany to-day, as well as in former days, comes from the West Indies, and is sometimes called Spanish mahogany.

Figure 51.

Handles, 1770–1800.

There is also a very beautiful grained mahogany now in the market coming from Africa.

The types of handles met with on chests of drawers and bureaus dating after 1760 are shown in Figure 51.

Figure 52.

Handles, 1800–20.

The first is a form of willow found on ball-and-claw-foot pieces and the late high chests of drawers; the second is a little screw handle, which had no plate, and was most often found on dressing-boxes;

the third is the oval handle found on the majority of the swell-front bureaus and Hepplewhite sideboards; and the fourth is a rather elaborate oval, with a ring handle, found on Sheraton pieces.

Figure 52 shows three forms of handles belonging to the Empire period, to which should also be added the brass rosette shown in Figure 38, and the glass rosette, which was quite commonly used on the late Empire bureau.

Figure 53.
Wash-stand, Hepplewhite, 1780–90.

Figure 54.
Wash-stand, Sheraton, about 1790.

Two little corner wash-stands which were in fashion with the swell- and serpentine-front bureaus are shown in Figures 53 and 54.

Figure 53 is Hepplewhite in style, and belongs to Mr. Meggat. Figure 54 is Sheraton, of mahogany, with drawer-fronts of bird's-eye maple, and belongs to Mrs. W. W. Andrews. They date 1780–1800.

IV

CUPBOARDS AND SIDEBOARDS

AT the time when the American colonies were settled cupboards had been in common use for generations. As the name implies, they were originally "bordes" on which to set drinking-cups. The earliest of these cupboards now known are constructed with shelves arranged like steps, and having often a "tremor" or canopy of wood; they are Gothic in style, and are spoken of sometimes as ambries or almeries, the names long used in the churches for a niche or cupboard near the altar, built to contain the utensils requisite for conducting worship.

The frequent mention of cupboards of all kinds throughout our probate records shows them to have been in very common use in all the colonies, and the spelling of the word is various enough to suit all tastes: cubboard, cubberd, cubbord, cubbert, cupbard, and cubart are some of the spellings employed. Court, wainscot, livery, standing, hanging, press, joined, plain, great, and painted are the descriptions most often met with. Court and livery, the words most often used in connection with the cupboards of New England and the South, seem to have lost their original meanings sometime before their use in this country. It is fair to suppose that they must have had some definite descriptive meanings when first applied, and these seem to have been derived from the French words *court* and *livrer*, *court* meaning low or short, and pointing to the conclusion that this must

have been a low piece of furniture, much like a modern serving-table. *Livrer* has been variously translated to mean service and delivery, perhaps referring to a custom in vogue during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of delivering to the household the rations required during the day and night. An old English dictionary defines livery as "something given out in stated quantities at stated times." For a note on the word cupboard in the "Promptuarium Parvulorum Clericorum," published by Wynkyn de Worde in 1510, and republished by the Camden Society in 1865, reads as follows: "The livery cupboard often mentioned in accounts and ordinances of the household was open and furnished with shelves whereon the ration called a livery allowed to each member of the household was placed." The English inventory records throughout the sixteenth century, published by the Surtees and Camden societies, make frequent mention of court and livery cupboards, but their values, even in the estates of persons of consequence, are so exceedingly low as to indicate that they must have been very simple in style and workmanship, hardly more than shelves supported by a frame.

The picture of the dining-hall at Christ Church College, Oxford (Figure 55), shows a court cupboard beneath the window, which must have been far finer than the bulk of those of the time to which it belongs (sixteenth century). The upper shelf will be seen to be supported by well-carved dragons, the lower by pilasters carved after the manner of Elizabethan pieces, and the centre shelf ornamented with deeply carved reedings. This cupboard doubtless represents very fairly the style in which cupboards were built during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Toward the close of the sixteenth century the English records show the court and livery cupboards to have increased in value, and this undoubtedly means that these pieces had been elaborated in some way, probably by the addition of enclosures in the form of cupboards and drawers, and also by the addition of ornaments in the form of carving and inlay. This we know to be true, for a

Figure 55.

Dining-hall, Christ Church College, Oxford.

(Showing cupboard beneath window.)

number of cupboards dating early in the seventeenth century are preserved in the collections of English museums which have enclosures and drawers and are carved and inlaid.

A very few specimens of cupboards with only the upper portion enclosed remain in this country, and the conclusion that the court cupboard has evolved from open shelves to the fully enclosed cupboards, of which comparatively large numbers remain, is well attested. The upper portion, as we have seen, was first enclosed, the lower remaining an open shelf; then a drawer was added below the middle shelf, and, finally, the lower portion was entirely enclosed, first with cupboards and then with drawers. Properly speaking, then, the terms court and livery do not apply to the cupboards which are to be found in this country, which are, technically speaking, press cupboards, that is, enclosed with doors; but there is every reason to think that these press cupboards were referred to as court and livery, for there is express mention of court cupboards with drawers and livery cupboards with drawers, which are not qualifications of real court or livery cupboards.

As far as this country is concerned, court and livery are used quite interchangeably, if one may judge from values given, for the prices of both are equally small or large, as the case may be: a court cupboard at Salem in 1647, 14s.; a livery cupboard at the same place in 1656, 18s.; a livery cupboard and cloth in 1674, £1 5s.; a court cupboard and cloth at Boston in 1700, £1; a court cupboard with a drawer at Boston in 1658, 16s.; a livery cupboard with drawers, 1666, 10s.

The cloth was mentioned quite as often with court as with livery, and suggests that their make-up must have been much the same. There is no mention of either court or livery cupboards in the early New York records, and the *kasses* or cupboards in use among the Dutch will be spoken of separately.

The Southern records contain quite frequent mention of both

court and livery cupboards, but, as far as the writer has been able to determine, these pieces have utterly disappeared, and it may be assumed that they were in character and material the same class of furniture as those remaining in New England, as the source of supply for North and South was the same.

The wood is usually oak, with pine freely used for the cupboard tops, bottoms, and backs, and for the bottoms of the drawers when drawers are used. In the panelled cupboards the mouldings are occasionally found of cedar, but are more often of pine, beech, or maple painted, and the turned ornaments, drops, nail-heads, turtle-backs, and triglyphs are of the same woods, also painted. The predominance of American oak in the construction of these cupboards

Figure 56.

Press Cupboard, about 1650.

denotes, of course, their manufacture here, and as they are such bulky, difficult pieces to transport, it would seem likely that comparatively few of them were brought over.

Figure 56 shows a cupboard constructed in the way most commonly employed. The upper portion is splayed at the corners, and the overhanging cornice is supported by heavy turned posts; the lower portion is somewhat plainer than usual, the doors and ends being panelled in as simple a manner as possible. It may here be observed that if but one portion of a cupboard or chest is ornamented it is almost without exception the upper portion. The arched panelling and the scroll carving are both indications of an early date, and it may safely be placed in the neighborhood of 1650. This cupboard

Figure 57.

Panelled Cupboard, last quarter seventeenth century.

is now in the Bolles collection, having formerly belonged to Mr. Hulbert, of Middletown, Connecticut.

Figure 57 is a wainscot or joined cupboard in the collection of Mr. Henry W. Erving, of Hartford, which is made throughout of oak,

no pine whatever appearing in its construction, a fact quite noteworthy, as the wood is American oak, and most American pieces show pine, while the majority of English pieces are much more sparing in the use of it. The cupboard is divided at the centre, and a long drawer runs across the bottom, the mouldings on this drawer being worked on, not applied as is usual. The stiles may have originally had turned ornaments, but the piece shows no evidence of having been painted. Its date is about 1675–1700.

Cupboards of this variety, with panelling in various geometrical designs, are very often constructed with the receding portions of the panel in pine and painted black, and with the mouldings painted red. Cupboards intended for clothes are found made in this way, some of them very large, from seven to eight feet in height and from six to eight feet in length, the large doors dividing at the centre, and showing no shelves, but instead large wooden pegs on which the clothes were hung. The hinges of iron are sometimes large and fancifully shaped, and applied on the outside as ornaments. Such pieces as these, with their fine panelling and brilliant colors, are exceedingly effective.

Figure 58 shows a very fine example of the panelled cupboard, dating about 1660–80, the drawer-fronts and centre of the panels being inlaid in block design with light and dark woods. This inlay is quite often met with in the fine cupboards abroad, but it is not very common in this country. This cupboard was found neglected in a stable some years ago, and carefully restored; but the feet, which are new, should have been of the ball variety illustrated in Figure 61, for, almost without exception, chests and cupboards having the wide outstanding moulding at the bottom have these ball feet, while the straight feet are merely the continuation of the stiles and uninterrupted by any moulding in most cases.

The feet of chests and cupboards being often missing, it may be of service to collectors to know that if the place where the feet were

PANELLED OAK PRESS CUPBOARD, 1660–80.
(*Figure 58.*)

applied originally can be examined, the presence of an auger-hole with rounded end denotes the use of a very old style of instrument, for the modern auger leaves a straight surface where it finishes a hole. The ball feet were furnished with dowel-pins which fitted into the holes.

Figure 59.

Panelled and Inlaid Press Cupboard, last quarter seventeenth century.

The cupboard from Mr. Erving's collection, shown in Figure 59, has come to be quite generally known among collectors as the Connecticut cupboard, for a number of them have been found in Connec-

ticut, and the writer has been unable to trace any that have been found elsewhere.

The panels of the lower portion will be seen to be almost identical with the chest shown in Figure 10. This cupboard differs somewhat from those previously shown, in that the upper section is not splayed, but presents a straight surface, leaving a narrow shelf running across the front. The wide drawer between the upper and lower section is not divided into two, as it appears to be. These cupboards date about 1680. Cupboards are occasionally met with in which both upper and lower sections are recessed, the lower cupboard finished in the same manner as the upper, and also having the turned posts at the corners. A drawer sometimes is added at the bottom. A cupboard of this description is in the Waters collection at Salem, Massachusetts.

Figure 60 shows a fine carved cupboard in the Bulkeley collection, and is a particularly interesting piece, as it has so many of the carved designs in common use in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The drawer and upper cornice have the very familiar scroll design; the stiles are in the rose design; and the lower rail has the half-circle border seen on so many of the chests. The blocking with which the top is finished is not usually found except on well-made pieces. This cupboard probably dates about 1675–80.

Another carved cupboard, belonging to Mr. Walter Hosmer, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, is shown in Figure 61, which also shows a large number of carved designs that are familiar to one acquainted with the chests. The main decoration consists of the scroll, while the stiles show the herring-bone or feather pattern to advantage; the rose also appears on the recessed portion of the upper cupboard. The reader will observe the wide outstanding moulding and the ball feet. A feature of the cupboard not observable from the illustration is the fact that the turned posts are of oak and have evi-

dently never been painted; the Ionic capitals and dentilled cornice add to the well-made appearance; and though all the carved designs are early ones, the general aspect which the cupboard presents of a fully developed style points to a date late in the seventeenth century. It

Figure 60.

Carved Oak Press Cupboard, last quarter seventeenth century.

was undoubtedly made in this country, as the wood is American white-oak. This cupboard is of unusual size, being 5 feet 1½ inches high, the lower section being 3 feet in height, 4 feet wide, and 21 inches deep, the upper part 2 feet 1½ inches high and 18¾ inches deep.

Such examples of carving as those last shown make it appear rather remarkable that the New England inventories do not mention carving in connection with cupboards, and only very occasionally in the description of chests; it would seem that the original cost of such

Figure 61.

Carved Oak Press Cupboard, last quarter seventeenth century.

work as these cupboards show would necessarily be high; but on looking through a long list of cupboard values taken at Plymouth, Salem, Boston, Philadelphia, and Yorktown, the values vary, as a rule, from 5s. to £1 5s., and valuations above these figures are very rare.

PANELLED OAK PRESS CUPBOARD WITH THREE DRAWERS,
LATTER HALF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.
(Figure 69.)

An entry of a "court cubbert" at Boston, 1681, places the value at £4, and at Yorktown a court cupboard with drawers, in 1657, is valued at £5; at Salem, in 1733, we find "one best cupboard £3," and the "next best, £2"; but the currency inflation suffered at this time in Massachusetts may bring the actual value of the last-named down to the average. The inside arrangement of these cupboards does not vary much. The upper cupboard is usually open,—that is, without shelves,—but sometimes has a shelf in the centre; and when the cornice at the top is not a drawer it often has a shelf concealed which is reached through the cupboard. The lower cupboard has from one to three long shelves. These cupboards, as well as the joined oak furniture in general, are fastened together mortise and tenon fashion with wooden pegs throughout; no nails whatever were used in them.

A very fine cupboard with drawers, known as the "Putnam cupboard," which was presented to the Essex Institute, Salem, by Miss Harriet Putnam Fowler, of Danvers, Massachusetts, a descendant of John Putnam, who settled in Salem about the year 1634, is shown in Figure 62. It differs from all the preceding in having the lower section entirely of drawers, a development which we may regard as the extreme to which these cupboards came, although a court cupboard with three drawers is mentioned in a Boston inventory as early as 1677. The panelling on the drawers is especially fine, all the mouldings being of cedar. The arch shape of the recessed panels of the cupboard portion would make it appear that this cupboard may be an early example of its kind. It probably dates, however, after the middle of the seventeenth century. The wood is English oak throughout, indicating its origin. The piece is made in two parts, the cupboard proper and the drawer section separate.

There is a cupboard with three drawers in the Bolles collection, dated 1690, showing that cupboards were being made in this way as late as that date.

Figure 63 shows a very beautiful and rare piece belonging to

Mr. Walter Hosmer, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, which may, perhaps, be such a piece as was referred to in several Yorktown (Virginia) inventories before 1700—"a cupboard of drawers." It is 53 inches high, 43 inches wide, and 30 inches deep, and is made in two sections, as were the high chests of drawers and the cupboard last shown.

Figure 63.

Cupboard of Drawers, last quarter seventeenth century.

The upper section consists of two drawers, one about 4½ inches wide, extending entirely across the front just beneath the moulding, and a larger drawer 10½ inches wide. The lower section is in appearance a cupboard, the doors enclosing three long drawers. The wood is English oak, and the face of the centre panels and the entire front of the narrow drawer, as well as the face of the applied ornaments of the upper section, are veneered with snakewood, an extremely hard wood

growing in Brazil. The mouldings are cedar, and there is no paint on the piece, except on the turned ornaments, which are painted black. The knob handles are of bone, and the drop handles on the enclosed drawers are of iron. This piece was found in Connecticut, but is undoubtedly of English origin.

Cupboard cloths and cushions are mentioned frequently in all the records, and often inventoried separately as articles of considerable value, sometimes higher than the cupboard itself. We know that the cupboard tops were used for the display of china, pewter, and glass, for this is often included in the appraised value of the cupboard; therefore the cupboard cloths or carpets are easily accounted for, as covers made of various materials (linen, tapestry, and needlework are some of the kinds mentioned) would very naturally have been in use. But what a cupboard cushion could be does not at first appear, as there seems to have been no cupboard that could possibly have been used as a seat, and cushions meant cushions in those days as now, and are almost invariably mentioned with joined chairs and settles. The only solution for the riddle of the cushion on the cupboard seems to be that the cushion was probably a very thin one, placed over or under the cloth as a protection to the china and glass against striking a hard surface with force enough to break or injure it.

The cupboards discussed so far in this chapter represent the kind of furniture with which the homes of the seventeenth century in this country were furnished, and to the average American are absolutely unknown.

The consensus of opinion among students of the subject is that the design for the wainscot cupboards came from Germany, and Herr von Falke, in his lectures on "Art in the House," shows a few designs for German Renaissance sideboards, mostly from the designs of Hans Vriedeman de Vries (painter, designer, and architect, born at Leeuwarden, in Friesland, 1527, died at Antwerp some time after 1604), which may easily have been the models for the heavily panelled cup-

boards so common here. The taste for the brilliant colors with which the cupboards were sometimes stained and painted probably also came from the Germans, for Dr. von Falke remarks that the magnificent inlay in colored woods, metals, and precious stones achieved by the great artists of Italy and Spain created a desire for these same color effects without the same expense and skill, thus giving rise to the use of paint or stain among the German cabinet-makers of the seventeenth century. Practically all the American cupboards show traces of having their mouldings and turned ornaments painted, and the carved pieces, many of them, show the presence of a black stain or paint used as a background to set off the carving more effectively. A cupboard is occasionally found where judicious scraping will show the original ornament to have been principally a design in paint, simulating carving or panelling. These painted cupboards are not, however, very common; a unique one is in the Bolles collection.

It has been previously remarked that the words court and livery do not appear in the inventory records at New York, and likewise the words oak and wainscot are almost entirely lacking. The word *kas*, sometimes spelled *kasse*, appears very often, and this was the Dutch name for cupboard. The records speak of plain cupboards, great cupboards, walnut cupboards, great presses, Holland cupboards, cedar cupboards, and Dutch painted cupboards, and a search among the treasures of Dutch families in the vicinity of New York has not revealed a single oak piece or a cupboard in any way resembling the court and livery cupboards of New England.

The cabinet or cupboard shown in Figure 64 was made in Holland in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and has recently been brought to this country. The carving is of a very high order, and the plain overhanging moulding and the curious ball feet are the only resemblance it bears to any Dutch pieces to be found in this country to-day.

A Dutch painted cupboard now preserved at the Van Cortlandt

Mansion at Van Cortlandt Park is shown in Figure 65. The quaint designs in fruit and flowers are in shades of gray, and seem never to have been tampered with. There is a long drawer across the bottom

Figure 64.

Dutch Cabinet, first quarter seventeenth century.

on side runners, and the cupboard doors when open disclose wide shelves. Kasses of this kind are made to separate in three parts: the heavy cornice lifts off, and the frame and drawer are separate from the cupboard proper.

The writer knows of three cupboards exactly like this in construction, belonging to Dutch families in the neighborhood of New York, which are made of pine, cherry, and maple respectively, and instead of being painted are panelled, the doors plainly, the drawers in geometric designs; and the drawers in each case have

Figure 65.

Painted Kas, latter half seventeenth century.

side runners. The inside arrangement is the same as that in Figure 65, except that a shallow drawer runs beneath the middle shelf. A Dutch painted cupboard valued at £1 is mentioned at New York in 1702.

Figure 66 shows a kas in the possession of Mrs. Henry R. Beekman, of New York City. The wood is walnut throughout, and the carving, which is well executed, is applied, and appears to be original; and the fact that several kasses of this kind of which the writer

Figure 66.

Carved Walnut Kas, about middle of seventeenth century.

knows are decorated in this same way, and in very similar patterns, would indicate that this method of applying the carving was the one generally employed. Its dimensions are 7 feet 3 inches in height, and 6 feet 2½ inches in width; the cornice overhang measures 8 inches, and the ball feet measure 9 inches in diameter. The wide drawer at the bottom is on side runners, and the inside shelves, three in number, are each furnished with a three-inch drawer, also on side runners. A rather curious fact is that although all these kasses have ball feet, no two sets have been found to be made just alike. The front feet only are the ball shape, the rear ones straight and slender. This kas very probably represents the finest of the cupboards in use among the Dutch, and the tradition in the Beekman family is that it came to New York with the first Beekman in Governor Stuyvesant's ship in the year 1647. The piece is certainly of Holland origin, and could date as early as the tradition states.

The records of New York speak of "great black walnut kosses," referring to such cupboards as this.

As far as the writer can ascertain, these kasses were the only style of large cupboard known or used by the Dutch, and their character is certainly quite different from that of similar pieces in the New England colonies.

Figure 67.

Carved Spoon-rack, about 1675.

An interesting little piece of Dutch carving found at Coxsackie, New York, which now belongs to the writer, is shown in Figure 67. The wood is beech, and the design is not at all common in this coun-

try. The three narrow shelves are each pierced with five oval openings designed to hold spoons. The wood of the shelves around these openings is much worn by long years of use. These spoon-racks are mentioned in some of the early Dutch records, called by their Dutch name, *lepel-borties*. The Dutch with their housewifely tastes loved to have their walls adorned with bright pewter and china, and devised shelves of various kinds for the holding of these valued

Figure 68.

Panelled Cupboard, 1740–50.

articles. "A painted wooden rack to sett china ware in" is mentioned at New York in 1696.

A simple panelled cupboard of maple, which was probably made

before 1750, as is indicated by the style of the panels and the simple bracket foot, is shown in Figure 68. This perhaps represents the latest style of standing cupboards that were used to any extent, and though they were quite common, very few have been preserved. The hinges and handles are new; the hinges were iron, and the handles a simple willow pattern. It is now in the possession of Mr. Luke A. Lockwood, of Riverside, Connecticut.

Figure 69.

Chest of Drawers with Cupboard Top, about 1780.

Chests of drawers with cupboard tops were much used during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The cupboards were furnished with three or four shelves, and were decorated with both carving and inlay, while the chest of drawers portion followed various fashions of feet and handles, the earliest having ball-and-claw feet

and no inlay. One of these cupboards is shown in Figure 69, which is made of French walnut, and beautifully inlaid in borders and medallions with colored woods. These chests of drawers with cupboard tops are sometimes called kasses, erroneously, for they are not of Dutch origin, but are distinctly English, and do not date earlier than 1740. Chippendale gives several designs for them in his "Gentleman's and Cabinet-Maker's Director."

Something should perhaps be said of the length of time that cupboards remained in fashion — much longer, no doubt, in the villages than in the towns, where a change of fashion was followed more closely. At Boston the records begin to speak of chests of drawers on frames about 1680, and we may date the decline of cupboards from this time, though in some parts of New England they continued to be made for some twenty years or more. A will dated at New York in 1708 specifies that the wife of the testator shall be allowed to take "a new cubbard that is now amaking by Mr. Shaveltie"; and Mrs. Vanderbilt's "Social History of Flatbush" mentions a Dutch cupboard which sold for £4 in 1790. At Philadelphia, which was not settled until 1682, the records make very little mention of cupboards. From 1683 until 1720 only six are found, all valued very low, and described as old or old-fashioned. On the other hand, chests of drawers and tables are freely mentioned, showing that the cupboards were superseded by the high chests of drawers which came into use in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

About the years 1725–30 houses with panelled walls and with cupboards built in to match the panelling were quite generally the style throughout the colonies. The majority of these cupboards were fastened into side walls, and were not, therefore, movable; but some, especially in the South, were fine pieces of workmanship with scroll tops and detached. The dining-room often had a corner cupboard or buffet, while the house throughout was supplied liberally with cupboards skilfully placed in various ways in the panelling of the walls.

Figure 70.

"Beaufatt" and Wall Panelling, about 1740.

Corner cupboards appear in the inventories earlier than buffets, and are evidently not the same thing, as their values are much lower; two at Boston, one in 1720 and the other in 1725, are valued, respectively, at 7s. and 5s., two at Philadelphia as late as 1750 are valued at 10s. and 12s., while buffets are almost invariably valued at more than a pound, and often at two or three pounds and higher. Thus at Yorktown,

Figure 71.

Corner "Beaufatt," about 1740.

Virginia, are mentioned in 1745, "1 beaufet £1 10s," 1753, "1 unfinished beaufet £5 10s," and one in 1763 valued at £7 10s. The buffets were usually corner pieces, but sometimes recessed into the side walls. They were furnished with a door or doors, the upper portion of

which was glass, and the lower panelled to match the room. The shelves of the upper cupboard are cut in graceful curves, and the top at the back is often finished with a shell, sometimes cut from a solid, very thick piece of wood.

Figure 70 shows a buffet which was built into the side wall of a house in Connecticut, and this, with the panelling for the whole side of the room, is owned by Mr. Meggat. The cupboard, as well as the other woodwork of the room, was never painted, and the pine has acquired a soft yellowish color with age.

A corner buffet, now the property of Mr. Albert H. Pitkin, of Hartford, which also came from a house in Connecticut, is shown in Figure 71. The cupboard portion is made separate from the outer portion, to which the doors, panelled like it, are attached, leaving a space of about four inches between the two. These buffets were commonly called "beaufatts," "beaufets," or "beaufats," and a village in the vicinity of Northampton, Massachusetts, has acquired the name Beaufat from the fact that one of these cupboards, which was considered quite remarkable, was built into a house there.

A fine example of the woodwork of this period is shown in Figure 72, a cupboard presented to the old Philadelphia Library Building by John Penn in 1738. The broken-arch cornice with the urn, which was very fashionable for interior woodwork at this time, is well illustrated in this piece.

SIDEBOARDS

Sideboards as we know them are comparatively recent inventions belonging to the latter half of the eighteenth century. The court and livery cupboards were extensively used in the dining-rooms, or "parlours," as they were generally called, their drawers and compartments making a convenient storing-place for linen and china, and their flat tops were commonly utilized for exhibiting the china, silver, and pewter. When the oak cupboards were no longer in

Figure 72.

Cupboard with Glass Door, 1738.

favor, the corner cupboards or buffets replaced them and served the same purposes. During this time, however, when cupboards were in general use, there is occasionally mention of side tables and sideboard tables. At New York, in 1689, mention is made of "a sideboard table 15s"; in the same year "1 side table with a drawer" cost 18s.; and in 1677 "four sideboard cloths" are mentioned; and there is record at Boston, in 1707, of "a sideboard table 6s."

What these sideboard tables were it is very difficult to say, as a thorough search and inquiry among collectors have failed to discover any table which would properly answer this description. There are, however, specimens of English sideboards extant which are the same style of furniture as the panelled chests and cupboards so common here. One of these may be seen at the South Kensington Museum, which is a long, narrow oak table with three drawers in a row, panelled after the fashion of the drawers in the cupboard (Figure 62). This stands on five legs, the three in front being turned and the two rear ones plain and straight; a heavy stretcher or brace runs around the front and sides about six inches from the floor. There are two tables or sideboards very similar to this in the Bolles collection which have recently been brought from England, and it was probably such pieces as these that were referred to in the above inventories.

About 1740 marble tables began to be mentioned as part of the dining-room furniture: Boston, 1741, "in ye parlour 1 marble slab and table"; in 1748, "in the parlour 1 marble table with mahogony frame"; in 1759, "in the dining room 1 marble table"; in 1767, "1 marble sideboard and frame"; and the Boston "Evening Post" for July, 1751, advertises "a variety of fashionable furniture including stone tables." Chippendale's designs, published in 1754, show no sideboards with drawers or cupboards, but sideboard tables having marble tops and elaborately carved mahogany frames. The fashion of making the sideboard tops of marble was certainly a practical one, far better adapted for serving purposes than the polished wood tops

so sensitive to heat and moisture. As the English fashions were so closely followed here, the entries quoted above we believe to have reference to such marble-topped serving-tables as Chippendale made use of. For some reason these too seem to have disappeared, perhaps because the weight of the marble tops strained the frames to an extent which made them particularly likely to become broken, and so they were discarded.

The first style of sideboard which is now found in this country is the slender-legged inlaid mahogany one commonly credited to Chippendale. It is, however, not in any sense Chippendale either in design or workmanship. The statement is repeatedly met with, and usually supported by traditions as to date of importation or purchase, that sideboards of this kind date before 1750. This seems practically impossible, as there is no trace of any furniture made with a straight, tapering leg, and decorated with inlay, as these sideboards invariably were, as early as 1750. The fact seems to be that this fashion originated with an English designer named Thomas Shearer, a member of the London Society of Cabinet-makers, whose book of prices was published in 1788. Mr. W. K. Clouston, in his book on "The Chippendale Period in English Furniture," gives the credit of the designs therein shown for serpentine inlaid sideboards to Shearer, whose name they bear, though Hepplewhite was also a member of this society, and at this time seems to have been working with Shearer. In his own book of designs, published a little later, Hepplewhite adopts this same fashion in his sideboards, and as his reputation seems to have much outlasted Shearer's, they generally bear his name. The book of prices gives this interesting list of woods which were principally employed by these makers for marquetry and inlay: "satin wood, either solid or veneered, manilla, safisco, havannah, king, tulip, rose, purple, snake, alexandria, panella, yew and maple," the principal wood being, of course, always mahogany. Great numbers of sideboards made after these designs are still to be seen in this

country, which were undoubtedly made here, judging from the fact that the veneering is on pine, and the insides of the drawers and back are of the same wood. The outlines of the fronts and sides are varied in many ways, as is also the arrangement of drawers and cupboards. The inlay also is sometimes but an outline of holly and satinwood around the top, drawer-fronts, and legs, and sometimes quite elaborate marquetry designs in many-colored woods are used. The handles are almost invariably the brass ones with oval plates.

Figure 73.

Hepplewhite Sideboard, 1790–1800.

A Shearer or Hepplewhite sideboard of very graceful design, belonging to Mr. L. A. Lockwood, is shown in Figure 73. The front is serpentine in shape, an extra curve being added below its two centre drawers; the drawer-fronts and top are veneered in very finely grained mahogany on whitewood. This is usually the case, a sideboard of this kind being seldom met with where the drawer-fronts are solid. The fan inlay in the corners of drawers and cupboard doors, as well as the wreath design on the legs, is characteristic. At least one drawer is usually arranged in sections to hold bottles.

Figure 74, the effect of which is very much marred by the cheap modern handles, is also a fine example of Hepplewhite sideboard, belonging to Mr. Ethridge, of Salem, Massachusetts. Each drawer has a panel in light mahogany bordered with fine lines of inlay

Figure 74.

Hepplewhite Sideboard, 1790–1800.

(Handles new.)

in white holly and ebony; the edge of the drawer outside of the panel is in dark mahogany, thus giving a very fine effect. The small oval panels set into the stiles above the legs are in satinwood. The narrow drawers each side of the centre cupboards are in this piece the bottle drawers. The knife- or spoon-boxes shown on the

top of this sideboard were very generally made to accompany them, and are usually fine pieces of cabinet work beautifully inlaid; the inside is arranged with a wooden section set on a slant pierced in proper shapes for the holding of knives and spoons, and often each little hole is surrounded with a fine band of inlay. The handles and escutcheons are sometimes silver.

Figure 75.

Hepplewhite Sideboard, 1799.

A sideboard which was part of the wedding outfit of Mr. John Williams, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1799, and now owned by his granddaughter, Mrs. W. W. Andrews, is shown in Figure 75. The flip-glasses, tea-caddy, and silver shown with it belonged also to Mr. Williams. The large square drawers are bottle drawers, and still contain the silver crescent-shaped markers which hung over the

necks of the bottles. The inlay in this piece is but a fine line following the outlines of the top, drawers, and frame; the legs have the little wreath which is almost never omitted. The brass handles are the original ones, and have stamped on them a basket with a pineapple projecting from it.

Sideboards of which the three above shown are types remained in favor for a considerable period. They probably were known and used here at about the same date as in England, and if we deduct ten

Figure 76.

Sheraton Sideboard, about 1800.

years from the date of the published design, on a reasonable supposition that they may have been already executed before the designs were published, 1778 would be as early a date as we should obtain for the introduction of this style. That they were made as late as 1804 is certain, for the writer has seen a bill for a sideboard very similar to Figure 75 dated in that year.

These sideboards average about six feet in length and twenty-four inches in width, though they were made in many shapes and sizes, sometimes in miniature, and occasionally one is seen which is made to fit the corner of a room, the top being triangular.

In 1791 Thomas Sheraton, of London, published a book containing a number of designs for sideboards. He professes great dislike for Hepplewhite's work, but nevertheless his designs show the influence of that maker. He made great use of the slender fluted leg in place of the square tapering one, and used inlay both in wood and metal. Some of his extravagant pieces are elaborately painted and trimmed with brass.

The majority of sideboards in this country which are modelled after his designs are comparatively plain, most of them having no inlay.

A sideboard that may be properly called American Sheraton, which belongs to Mr. Meggat, is shown in Figure 76. The knife-boxes are attached to the top, and furnished with sliding scroll covers. Two small drawers pull out from the ends of these, as shown in the illustration. Many sideboards similar to this in general style are found which have, instead of the attached knife-boxes, the end sections raised about four inches above the centre, probably designed to hold knife-boxes in urn shape, one of which is shown in Figure 77.

Figure 77. Knife-and-Spoon Box, last quarter eighteenth century.

The top of these urn-shaped boxes is not on a hinge, but is supported by a rod of wood running through the centre, which, when the top is raised sufficiently, releases a spring, thus holding the top in that position. This box belongs to Mr. Meggat. The fashion of making the knife-boxes in urn shape is not original with Sheraton, as it had been extensively used by other English cabinet-makers before this time. They are very fine specimens of cabinet work, the fitting of the graduated sections requiring a skilful workman.

A sideboard very much like one of the designs in Sheraton's book, except that it is much simplified, is shown in Figure 78. The drawers are decorated with a narrow inlay strip, and the handles are

Figure 78.

Sheraton Sideboard, about 1800.

the rosette and ring, which in many styles and sizes were much used by Sheraton on furniture of all kinds.

The distinguishing characteristic of Sheraton sideboards in this country is the slender fluted legs. Whenever this is met with it shows his influence. The two sideboards here shown represent fairly well the general character of American Sheraton, though, of course, endless variations in shape, size, and arrangement are to be found. The wood is always mahogany.

With the decline in favor of early Sheraton designs, about the year 1800, the character of construction for furniture in general is radically changed. The graceful effects obtained by the use of the slender, square, and fluted legs were entirely lost by the substitution of the massive round or rope-carved pillars, extending nearly to the floor, and finished with the bear- or lion's-claw foot. This massive design was adopted from the French Empire style, but the Amer-

ican makers omitted the elaborate trimmings in brass and ormolu and depended for effect upon the grain of the wood and the heavy carving. In the vocabulary of the dealer of to-day, the term colonial is applied to this plain and massive style—a misapplied name, for the fashion was not known until some time after the

Figure 79.
Empire Sideboard, 1810–20.

American colonies had become states. The sideboards in Empire style are almost always furnished with three drawers beneath the top, the fronts of which are sometimes made on a curve; the handles are rosette and ring, lion-head and ring, and the brass or glass rosette. The doors of the cupboards which filled the lower portion are nearly always panelled, often in oval or Gothic form, as is

also the board which finishes the back of the top. Veneering is used extensively to obtain elaborate grain effects, and the mahogany used is very fine. Trimmings in brass are occasionally employed, but the majority make use of panelling and carving for decorative purposes.

Figure 79 shows an Empire sideboard of conventional design having the rope-carved column extending to the floor, forming the feet. The backboard makes use of a style of broken arch which was quite often used with the Empire designs, although it is a survival of a much earlier style.

Figure 80.

Empire Sideboard, 1810–20.

Figure 80 illustrates very well the circular pillars and bear-claw feet which are most characteristic of American Empire furniture in general. Sideboards constructed after the fashion of this one are commonly without the raised drawers at the end, and are often furnished with a serving-board which pulls out from beneath the top at

the ends. The centre cupboard portion is sometimes omitted, leaving the section between the two inside columns open to accommodate a cellaret.

Figure 81 shows a sideboard in late Empire style, which is a type of many which were made in the South, especially in Virginia

Figure 81.

Empire Sideboard, 1810–30.

and Maryland. The rear board is raised sufficiently to accommodate a large mirror. The raised panels on the fronts of the end cupboards will be seen to terminate in claw feet, which rest on a little platform extending across the front. The feet proper are plain balls, which often replace the claw in the last surviving forms of Empire sideboards. Both the last two sideboards belong to Mr. Meggat.

About 1820–30 great numbers of sideboards after the fashion

of Figure 82 were made in New England, the drawers and cupboard being ornamented with veneered panels of bird's-eye maple; the front of the wide drawer at the top was sometimes arranged with a spring and quadrant, and the inside finished with drawers and pigeonholes for use as a desk.

Figure 82.

Late Empire Sideboard, 1830.

Empire furniture, which preserved a semblance of the original French designs from which they were taken, continued to be made as late as 1850, when monstrosities following somewhat their outline, but utterly without merit or beauty, paved the way for the machine-made furniture.

V

CHAIRS

IT is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to give the exact date when a particular style of chair appeared or disappeared; still, the subject divides itself rather naturally into periods corresponding with certain political events at the beginning of which the influence was first felt, and the end represents the time when the style began to be called old-fashioned. The dates will, however, be somewhat arbitrary, and it may happen that in a few sporadic cases the style appeared slightly earlier or lasted slightly later; but in the main it will be found accurate, and a convenient method of fixing styles with date.

The First Period will be from 1620 to 1660, the date of the accession of Charles II.

The Second Period, 1660 to 1702, the date of the accession of Anne.

The Third Period, 1702 to 1750, when the influence of Chippendale began to be felt in this country.

The Fourth Period, 1750 to 1840, the period of cabinet-makers.

Between the Second and Third Periods will be added a Transition Period which overlaps both.

No single rule, of course, can be laid down that will enable one to tell the age of a given chair, as there are many elements which enter to determine it; but a fairly safe guide to follow is that the

heavier the underbracing the greater the age. Strength was, we may presume, the maker's end in view, for a glance at the solid backs and seats or the heavy bracing, and an attempt to lift one of the wainscot chairs, will convince one that so far as lasting qualities were concerned they left little to be desired.

FIRST PERIOD — 1620–60

We find chairs mentioned sparsely in the earliest inventories of New England and the South, for they were not yet in common use in England, and the idea of the chair being a seat of honor was still general. "The Gate of Language Unlocked" (sixth edition, printed at London in 1643) states the following: "The chair belongeth to the teacher, the lower seats (fourms & benches) to the learner." Forms were for many years used almost exclusively in the place of chairs, and we constantly find mention of "short form" and "long form and table" in the inventories. These forms were popular in England, and were probably similar to those still found in the dining-halls of some of the English colleges and schools, benches heavily supported, as shown in Figure 83, which is the dining-hall at Christ Church College, Oxford.

The short form was a short bench, sometimes called in the inventories joined stool, for the ends of the tables, and the long forms were used on the long sides, those shown in Figure 83 all being long forms. Thus we find at New York, in 1680, "a long table and 2 long formes," one apparently for each side of the table; at Providence, in 1712, occurs the following entry of furniture in the parlor: "a great table, 3 formes, a great chair and 2 cushions," a form for each side and one end, and the chair for the head of the house, with one cushion for the seat of the chair and the other for a footstool.

In nearly all of the early inventories we find stools and joined stools commonly mentioned; thus, at Plymouth, in 1641, "2 joined

Figure 83.

Dining-hall, Christ Church, Oxford.

stools," and in the same inventory "4 joyned stools and 2 joined chairs," which recalls a definition in Watts's "Logick," written early in the eighteenth century: "if a chair be defined a seat, for a single person, with a back belonging to it, then a stool is a seat for a single person, without a back." We also find the expression joint or "joynt" stools, which old dictionaries define as folding three-legged stools. Thus at New York, in 1677, we find "the table in the parlor

Figure 84.

Turned Chair, sixteenth century.

and the five joynt stools"; at Yorktown, in 1658, "3 joint stools"; at Philadelphia, in 1694, "3 old 3 legged stools." A description of such stools is given by Cowper in "The Task":

> "Joint stools were then created; on three legs
> Upborne they stood; three legs upholding firm
> A massy slab."

Stools continued to be used all through the seventeenth century, and although they are abundantly mentioned in the inventories, they are to-day extremely rare, and few are to be found in this country, although many are still to be seen in England.

There seem to have been at least three styles of chairs in the period under consideration.

First, the turned chair, usually made of ash, although some are found with maple posts and hickory spindles. They are made entirely of turned pieces, and differed in degree of beauty according as the spindles were elaborated.

Figure 85.

Turned Chair, 1575–1620.

Figure 86.

Turned Chair, 1575–1620.

Figure 84 is probably one of the oldest chairs in this country. It belongs to the Connecticut Historical Society, and by the best authorities has been assigned to the early sixteenth century.

Figures 85 and 86 are Elder

Brewster's and Governor Carver's chairs respectively, and were, according to tradition, brought over in the Mayflower. They are at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, and probably date the latter part of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Elder Brewster's chair is particularly handsome, originally having had on the sides a double row of spindles about the legs between the braces similar to the back. Both pieces originally had flag or rush seats.

Chairs in the fashion of Figure 86 are commonly known as "Carver chairs," and are more frequently met with than any other pattern of the turned chair. They are found in at least two sizes, Figure 86 representing the larger, and such chairs vary from about 43 to 47 inches in height; the seat is usually 18 inches from the floor, the width of the seat in front is from 20 to 22 inches, while the posts in the largest place measure from 6½ to 8 inches in circumference. It is generally believed that the greater the circumference of the post, the older the chair.

The smaller size, shown in Figure 87, is 43 inches high from the floor to the top of the back post; the seat in front is 18 inches wide, and the circumference of the post at the largest place is 6 inches. As the legs of this chair had been cut off, it is impossible to know exactly what its original height was; it probably stood about an inch higher, making the seat about 18 or 19 inches from the floor. This chair was found at Guilford, Connecticut, and belongs to the author. The small size appears to be less common than the larger, and is occasionally found as a side chair. These chairs are referred to in the inventories as follows: at Plymouth, 1643, "2 flag bottomed chairs & 1 frame for a chair"; Salem, 1673, "3 turned chairs"; Boston, 1698, "5 straw bottomed chairs"; 1699, "1 great turned chair"; New York, 1685, "9 Mat bottomed chairs"; 1680, "a high Matted chair & an elbow matted chair"; 1692, "12 chairs latticed with reeds"; Philadelphia, 1709, "2 turned chairs, one armed"; and at Yorktown, Virginia, 1667, "5 old bulrush chairs."

These turned chairs are also found with slats across the back instead of turned spindles; but as the large majority of the slat-back pieces belong to a later date, we will postpone the discussion of them.

Figure 87.

Turned Chair, first quarter seventeenth century.

Chairs with large turned posts were also made with but one leg in the back and two in front, having triangular seats. They were not very common, however, in this country; but a very fine specimen is the well-known "Harvard College Chair." Mention of such chairs probably appears in a Salem inventory in 1673,—"3 bufet chairs 12s,"—for in the "Promptuarium Parvulorum" of Galfridus, published in the sixteenth century, is the following definition: "Bofet, thre fotyd stole."

The question is often asked whether the turned chairs came originally from England or Holland. We are inclined to believe that they are English, for we know of two, much like the Carver chair, which have been handed down in an English family of the working class, and we are told that there are more among that class there; and, further, in 1645 Mrs. Margaret Lake, sister-in-law to Governor Winthrop, sent to England for "2 armed cheares with fine rushe bottums," and turned chairs are the only variety in use at that time that could have had rush seats.

The second style, the wainscot chair, was made of oak, as the name implies, and was usually more or less carved, having heavy bracing near the floor. The seats, of hard oak slabs, were often made more comfortable with cushions, which are frequently men-

tioned in the inventories in connection with the chairs, as in Salem, in 1644, "2 cheares & two cushans"; also the following entries refer to these chairs: Plymouth, 1634, "a joyned chair"; 1682, "a chair

Figure 88.

Wainscot Chair, about 1600.

and cushion"; at New York, 1691, "7 chairs and four old cushions"; at Philadelphia, 1694, "4 framed oak chairs and cushions"; 1695, "large oak arm chair and cushion"; at Providence, 1712, "a great chair and 2 cushions"; 1727, "2 cushons for grate chear"; 1730, "a greate cheiar and quoshen"; at Yorktown, Virginia, 1658, "2

wainscoate chairs"; 1659, "3 wainscoate chairs." They are also frequently referred to as wooden chairs.

There is mention of the wainscot chairs in the English inventories in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and they were probably more generally used there than here, comparatively few being mentioned in the New England inventories, although a fairly large number are mentioned in those of the South. They are valued from two to three times as much as the turned chairs, which undoubtedly accounts for this fact. The chairs, when carved, show the same designs as the chests and cupboards of the period.

Figure 88 is now in Essex Institute, Salem, and according to tradition is Elizabethan; the carving would seem to bear this tradition out. It is an unusually handsome piece, the carving being both elaborate and well executed, and it is evident that the chair must have belonged to a family of some consequence.

Figure 89.
Wainscot Chair, 1614.

Figure 89 was made at Cheapside, London, in 1614, and was used by Governor Winslow, in 1633, in his council-chamber. The piece is a good example of the simpler form of this chair.

Figure 90 was brought to this country in 1660, but belongs to an earlier date. The carved panel is in the same design found in many of the cupboards and chests, and is similar to that shown in Figure 5. Both of these chairs are at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth.

A very beautiful wainscot chair, in the Bulkeley collection, is

shown in Figure 91, which came originally from Massachusetts. The carving is of the earliest patterns, reeding, half-circles, and geometrical designs. The top very clearly suggests the broken arch. It dates in the first half of the seventeenth century.

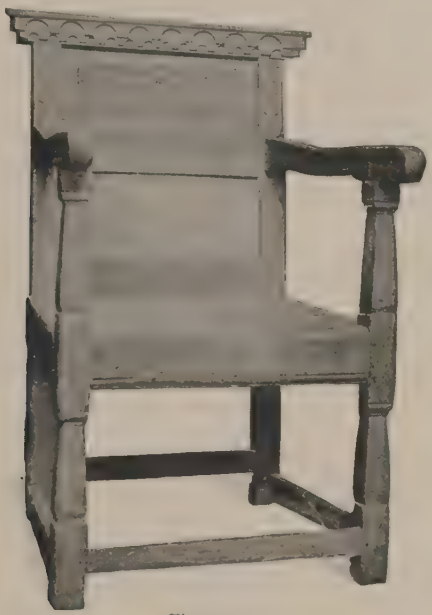


Figure 90.

Wainscot Chair, 1600–20.

Figure 92 is an example of another chair of this period which was commonly called a chair-table. A glance at the arms and underbracing shows that it belongs to the wainscot type. As the name implies, when the back is turned down it becomes a table. We find mentioned, in a Salem inventory of 1673, "a chair table 7s 6d," and again in 1690, and at Yorktown, Virginia, 1666, "1 table chair," and in 1675, "one new chair table 8s." This chair is practically the same as the famous Theodore Hook chair, although it is not carved.

The third style, which may be called a modification of the wainscot, is the leather chair, which dates a little later, and by some is called Cromwellian, although it appears in the inventories in this country a little earlier than his time. It was really of Italian design, coming to England through Holland during the Commonwealth, and very likely reached the Pilgrims, who had come from Holland, earlier than it did England, for we find these chairs first mentioned at Plymouth as early as 1643: "3 leather chairs, 3 small leather chairs £1 10s." We continue to find them mentioned freely until the close of the seventeenth century, as in the inventory of the famous Captain Kidd, at New York, 1692, "two dozen single nailed leather chairs, £1 16s"; and in New York, 1703, "8 leather cheares very old," undoubtedly refer-

Figure 91.

Wainscot Chair,
first half seventeenth century.

Figure 92.

Chair-table, 1660–80.

ring to chairs similar to that shown in Figure 93, or to those with turned frames.

In general style the leather chair was like the wainscot chair, the square back and seat being covered with leather, the edges often

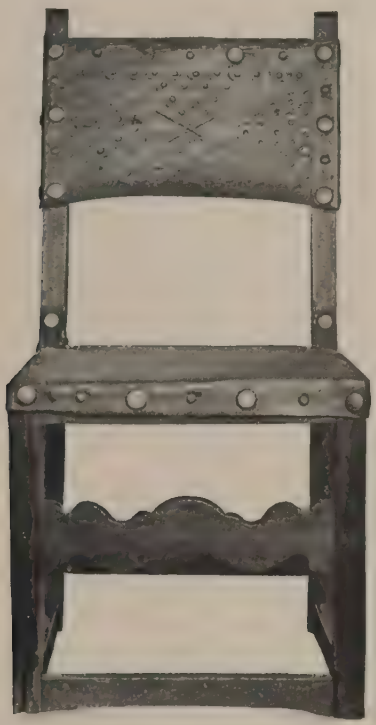


Figure 93.

Leather Chair, about 1640.

studded with brass nails. The underbracing, at first heavy and plain, was a little later turned.

Figure 93, belonging to Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, is a good example of a leather chair. It has a carved leather back and plain leather seat. The underbrace suggests the Italian style, and for that reason we place its date not later than 1640. This chair

originally stood somewhat higher from the floor, but the legs are worn away. Wainscot and leather chairs in general stood much higher from the floor than either the turned ones or those appearing later; in fact, the seats are often as high as twenty or twenty-two inches. They were apparently intended to be used with footstools, as were the benches, for we find the following description in "The Gate of Language Unlocked," before referred to:

"When the table is spread with the table cloth, dishes are set upon it and trenchers 'whether they be round or square' and also a salt sellar.

"Out of the bread basket, loaves (shives) of bread are set on the table, or pieces 'morsels'; and then messes of meat.

"The ghests that are bidden are brought (led) in by the feast-maker into the dining room (parlour) and when they have washed over a bason out of a ewer and have wiped with a towell; they sit down upon benches or stools set in order with cushions having foot stools set under them."

These leather chairs must not be confounded with the Spanish leather chairs, which are of later date and totally different style: Boston, 1653, "8 red leather backe chairs and 2 low leather backe stools"; Salem, 1647, "3 red leather chairs"; Boston, 1700, "6 russia leather chairs"; Philadelphia, 1683, "14 russia leather chairs"; 1686, "6 calfe leather chairs"; New York, 1691, "3 doz. russia leather chairs"; and Yorktown, 1668, "6 turkey leather chairs." These are references, no doubt, to the style of chair shown in Figure 93.

The York County (Virginia) records after 1660 show that a large number of these chairs were in use, one hundred and three of them being mentioned between the years 1657 and 1670; as many as twenty-eight in one inventory in 1667 are spoken of as old. Their values vary from one to ten shillings each.

SECOND PERIOD — 1660–1702

The accession of Charles II is marked, both in England and the colonies, by an increase in luxuries of every kind, for his long residence in France had accustomed him to far more elegance than England at that time afforded. In the colonies the struggle for existence was well in the background, and the inventories show a marked increase in the amount of furniture of all kinds, especially chairs.

One of the new styles was similar to the leather chair last mentioned; but instead of having the straight bracing and uprights, the lines were softened throughout by the substitution of a spiral-turned frame which gave the appearance of lightness without sacrifice of strength. (See Figure 170.)

Chairs of this style were often covered with "Turkey work," or an embroidery in imitation of it, such as appears on the settee in the figure last mentioned. This covering became very popular during the latter half of the seventeenth century, both for chair-coverings and also for table and cupboard cloths. It was an Oriental fabric woven by hand in the manner of the Turkey rugs, and was imported in great quantities in sizes suitable for chair seats, backs, etc. We find Turkey-work chairs mentioned in English inventories as early as 1589, the English having received permission, in 1579, from Amurath III to trade with Turkey. In New York we find, in 1677, "12 old Turkey chairs £1 4s"; Boston, 1669, "12 turkey work chairs £1 7s 4d"; at Yorktown, Virginia, 1674, "6 Turkey worked chairs £2 2s"; at Salem, 1684, "9 turkey work chairs without backs £2 4s"; "4 turkey work chairs with backs £1 12s"; at Philadelphia, 1687, "12 small turkie carpett chairs 2 of them broken £6"; and "6 turkie work chairs 1 of them broken £1 16s."

Turkey work and leather were very evidently not the only coverings used for these square-framed chairs, as the following inventory

entries will show: Salem, 1698, "6 old serge chairs"; New York, 1680, "6 old red cloth chairs"; 1698, "6 chairs with red plush and 6 with green plush"; Philadelphia, 1687, "6 camlett silk fringe low chairs"; 1668, at Yorktown, "6 wrought chairs"; and, as upholstery was not in use for the turned or wainscot chairs, these entries must refer to the square-framed chairs just described.

Very few of these Turkey-work or leather chairs have survived, although through a period of some thirty years they are frequently mentioned in the inventories both in the North and South, and it is not at all uncommon to find a large number, from one to three dozen, in a single inventory. The probable reason is that when the leather or Turkey work was worn out the frames were of little use and were broken up or thrown away.

The most notable change in this period was the introduction of cane furniture from Holland. This change in the character of the chairs is so radical that it seems contrary to the general rule of development, for the graceful, beautiful examples of the carved frame and fine cane chairs which now became fashionable are of another nature entirely from the turned or wainscot pieces generally in use.

The carved frame cane chairs are called by many Jacobean, and this apparently upon no definite authority that we have been able to find.

The chapter on Jacobean furniture in Mr. Frederick Litchfield's "History of Furniture" has for its initial illustration an elaborate cane chair, and this fact has been quoted as authority for the cane chairs being Jacobean. We have consulted Mr. Litchfield on this subject, and his explanation of the presence of the illustration referred to under Jacobean furniture is that in that chapter the furniture of the time of Charles II is included, though not, properly speaking, Jacobean. The chair, he states, in his opinion, is not earlier than the time of Charles II. After a somewhat prolonged study of the matter, we have come to the conclusion that no such chairs were at all

common in England during the Jacobean period, which, properly speaking, could not be said to extend beyond the reigns of James I and Charles I, 1603–49.

The chairs which were at all common at that time were either the turned, wainscot, or leather chairs before described; the cane chair did not put in its appearance in England before the reign of Charles II, and it was not until the last twenty years of the seventeenth century that they became very plentiful. A circumstance which bears this statement out is that when Anne, who afterward became queen, was on a visit to England in 1680, a suit of furniture was made for her special use at Forde Abbey in this style, and it is fair to assume that it would have been made in the latest fashion.

There appear to have been two distinct types of the cane chair which found their way to Holland in the first half of the seventeenth century, and, after receiving some characteristic Dutch additions, were finally exported to England, and became there what is commonly known as the Jacobean cane chair.

One was the scroll-foot chair, which appears to have come from Italy or France in the reign of Louis XIII (1610), which we shall call Flemish, and the other was the leather chair which came from Spain or Portugal, which we shall call Spanish.

The fact that furniture should be exported from Holland was not strange, for Antwerp seems to have been a great centre for that trade from about 1560 down, and Anderson, in his "History of Commerce," says that in that city were Germans, Danes, Italians, English, and Portuguese, and the commerce included exchanges with all the civilized countries of Europe. Antwerp was exporting household furniture to Genoa, England, and Spain as early as 1560, and, in fact, was one of the most important places in the commercial world.

So far as this country is concerned, these chairs appear in the inventories not earlier than the last quarter of the seventeenth century. We find at Yorktown, 1687, "2 old cained chairs 16s," and in

New York, in 1691, "13 cane chairs broken and out of order," which would indicate at least that at that date the style was not new. At Philadelphia, 1686, "8 cane chairs"; 1687, "8 cane chairs"; Boston, 1712, "1 doz. cane chairs with black frames in the dining room"; Boston, 1712, "6 cane chairs with carved Oak frames"; Boston, 1732, "1 doz. cane chairs"; Salem, 1734, "6 cane chairs."

The style remained in fashion until after 1719, for in that year in the Boston "News Letter" is mention of "fine cane chairs just imported from London."

We will take up now these two styles of cane chairs separately, showing their various developments.

The first or Flemish style is fairly well represented in Figure 94. The feet are characteristic of the style, and it will be noticed that the scroll foot turns outward, as it should in the pure Flemish style. The top of the back is slightly carved, and the back is of unusually graceful shape. The seat, of course, originally was of cane, as is the back; the carved front brace is common to both the Flemish and Spanish styles, and usually follows the outline of the top of the back. This chair belongs to Mr. Robert T. Smith, of Hartford, Connecticut.

Figure 95 is another example of the Flemish style. The seat, which now shows the remains of rush, was originally cane. The scroll feet on this chair are not the pure pattern shown in the last figure, but turn backward, and the legs throughout show the influence of the Spanish style in being turned and not carved. The frame of the top is slightly more carved than that in the preceding figure. This is one of the chairs of Richard Lord, whose will was probated at Hartford in 1712, and the chair is now at the Connecticut Historical Society's rooms.

Figure 96 shows still another variation. The back is unusually well carved, the top in the design of an eagle. The uprights supporting the back end in carved heads. This pattern of chair, with its

Figure 94.

Flemish Chair, last quarter seventeenth century.

rather square effect in the back and in the front brace, we believe to be an English adaptation of the Flemish style. The feet are of the same order as those shown in the last illustration.

Figure 95.
Flemish Chair, about 1690.

Figure 96.
Chair showing English Adaptation of Flemish, 1680–90.

Figure 97 illustrates another chair of this general style; although the feet have been cut off, the turning of the legs indicates that the foot was a plain knob such as appeared in the wainscot chairs. The arms will also be observed to be very much the same as those on the wainscot chair shown in Figure 89. The back, however, proclaims it as belonging in general to the Flemish style, and the carving is

better than is usually found on these pieces. It is probably an English adaptation, as is shown in the last figure. The back and seat were originally cane. This chair is at the Van Cortlandt Manor, Croton, New York.

Figure 97.

Chair showing English Adaptation of Flemish. 1680–1700.

(Feet missing.)

The backs of chairs which we have designated as being Flemish in general design distinctly suggest the splat, separate from the upright posts, this distinction being developed later as a distinct splat in the Dutch cabriole-legged chairs. The feet are finished with the scroll, turning either forward or backward, the latter being more com-

monly the case in this country. The wood of both the Flemish and the Spanish chair was either walnut, maple, beech, or occasionally oak.

Before describing the Spanish style we will describe the style of chair shown in Figure 98, belonging to Miss Augusta Manning,

Figure 98.

Italian Chair, 1680–1700.

which, so far as the upper part is concerned, is after the Flemish style; but the legs are of a very different type, being distinctly Italian, and much like those found on the dressing-tables belonging to the six-legged chests of drawers. (See Figure 25.) Chairs in this Italian

style were usually upholstered, and this chair probably never had cane. The chair is made of oak, and dates in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

The second style of cane chair was developed directly from the "Spanish chair," of which Figure 99 is a splendid specimen. It will be seen that it differs from the Flemish style in that the back, which is covered with the world-famous Spanish carved leather, is solid, there being no suggestion of a splat; the legs are turned, and the foot is not a scroll, but a distinct style which has very generally received the name of Spanish foot. The carved front brace is the same, and the general effect is so similar to the preceding that it is natural they should have affected each other. The legs and feet in the Spanish style are much more often found in this country than the Flemish, but the Spanish back is rare. This chair is at Memorial Hall, Philadelphia.

There is mention at New York, in 1693, of "6 Spanish leather chairs £1, 6s," and in 1703, "2 large elboe leather chairs £7"; the high value placed on the last mentioned leads us to think they were of the fine Spanish leather.

Figure 100 is an exceedingly fine example of the English adaptation of the Spanish chair. Instead of the leather, the back is cane of an unusually fine quality, and the framework of the back, although not carved, is relieved of bareness by its beautiful curves. The wood is English walnut. The front legs and supports for the arms have lost some small parts which complete their graceful shape, and the feet, though greatly worn, are recognizable as Spanish. The carved front brace follows in general outline the curves of the back. It will again be noted that this differs from the Flemish style in that the back has no separate splat or carving at the top, and the feet are Spanish instead of scroll. This chair was once owned by the Wyllys family of Charter Oak fame, and is now in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Figure 99.

Spanish Chair, latter half seventeenth century.

Figure 101 illustrates a chair found at Coxsackie, New York, now in the writer's possession, combining both the Flemish and Spanish styles, the back being in Flemish and the legs ending in an almost perfect Spanish foot.

Figure 100.
Chair in Spanish Style, 1680–1700.

Figure 101.
Chair showing Flemish and Spanish Styles, 1680–1700.

TRANSITION PERIOD

We now come to what will be called the Transition Period, where we shall find Flemish, Spanish, and Dutch styles combined in one way or another, and showing very clearly various steps in the change from the cane chairs to the cabriole-legged Dutch chairs.

Figures 102, 103, 104, and 105 bring us to what we may suppose were the last surviving forms of the Spanish and Flemish styles. The legs and bracing are still the same in outline, but greatly simplified.

In Figure 102 no carving remains except a few lines above the back, and the seat was originally cane. The outlines of the back and

Figure 102.
Late Spanish, 1700–10.

Figure 103.
Late Spanish, 1700–10.

feet suggest the Spanish style, while the separate splat suggests the Flemish. It is in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Figure 103, which belongs to Mr. William Meggat, shows no carving whatever; and, instead of having had cane back and seat, it

was covered with leather, and the feet are splendid examples of an American adaptation of the Spanish feet. It is practically the same chair as that shown in the preceding figure, except for the leather covering.

Figure 104, in the possession of Miss Augusta Manning, shows an outline back in the Spanish style clearly suggesting the Wyllys

Figure 104.

Late Spanish, showing Dutch Influence, 1700–15.

Figure 105.

Queen Anne Chair, showing Spanish Feet, 1710–20.

chair shown in Figure 100; but it has the Dutch wooden splat instead of the cane, and the front brace is again of the large turned variety, and the feet, again, are Spanish.

Figure 105 is practically the same chair as that shown in Figure 103, with the Spanish feet, but has the Dutch back and splat, which now for a half-century and more is the pattern elaborated and adapted through the almost countless variations of the Chippendale period.

These last two illustrations show the change from the style of the Second Period to that of the Third.

We have seen also in England even a more marked harmonizing of the two styles in a chair with the back of the carved or embossed leather and brass nails of the Spanish pieces, having the Dutch cabriole legs with shell ornamentation and underbracing, showing clearly that so far as chairs are concerned the "missing link" is not missing.

THIRD PERIOD — 1702–50

Although in point of years this period is as long as those preceding it, the number of styles developed is surprisingly small. People were not so fastidious, and there were not the rapid changes in fashion which we find to-day. Styles were few, and well adapted to their needs, so there was little call for change, and they contented themselves with simple variations of the form then in use. After a careful examination of the chairs of this period we conclude that there were but two new styles to be found.

Sometimes, no doubt, it will be difficult at first glance to detect the truth of this statement, as often a single piece may show the influence of more than one style, or may be a variation of an earlier one. We are convinced that no distinctive style is indigenous to this country, although one will find variations here of the prevailing English and Dutch ones which may in a sense be called original.

The two new styles of chairs were the Dutch cabriole leg and the Windsor.

Before taking up these new styles we will examine the variations of former ones which continued into this period. The cane chair was still in general use, for in almost every inventory we find it mentioned. There is mention of cane chairs in the inventories of Salem, Boston, and Philadelphia as late as 1734. They were probably similar to Figure 95.

A common chair of this period was the so-called slat-back, an example of which, belonging to Mr. Luke A. Lockwood, of Riverside, Connecticut, will be seen in Figure 106. As we have already shown,

Figure 106.

Slat-back, about 1730.

some of these chairs with large turned posts date well back into the seventeenth century; but such specimens are extremely rare, and far the larger portion of them date from 1700–50. This chair is the survivor of the turned chair of the First Period, the difference being that the latter was made of turned pieces only, while the slat-back chair has substituted the slats for the spindles. These chairs were

commonly designated by the number of their slats thus, "three back," "four back," and "five back" — the one just shown being a four-back.

Figure 107 is a five-back chair in the pattern most often found in New England, dating early in the eighteenth century; and as

Figure 107.
Slat-back, about 1740–50.

Figure 108.
Slat-back, about 1750.

such chairs are somewhat hard to find, they are more highly prized than those with a smaller number of slats. It belongs to Mr. Meggat.

Figure 108 shows a five-back belonging to Mr. Frank C. Gillingham, of Germantown, Pennsylvania, which represents the Southern type of this chair. The arms are high and cut much like those of the wainscot chairs, and the chair is original throughout.

Figure 109 is still another slat-back, belonging to Mr. C. J. Burnell, of Hartford, Connecticut, which has cut instead of turned uprights, and belongs to a later date. The hollow cut in the top slat accommodates the head and relieves the very upright position re-

quired by the straightness of the back. The brass terminals are new. Such chairs as these may have been referred to in a Yorktown inventory of 1745: "6 Ribed back chairs £1."

Figure 109.
Slat-back, about 1760–70.

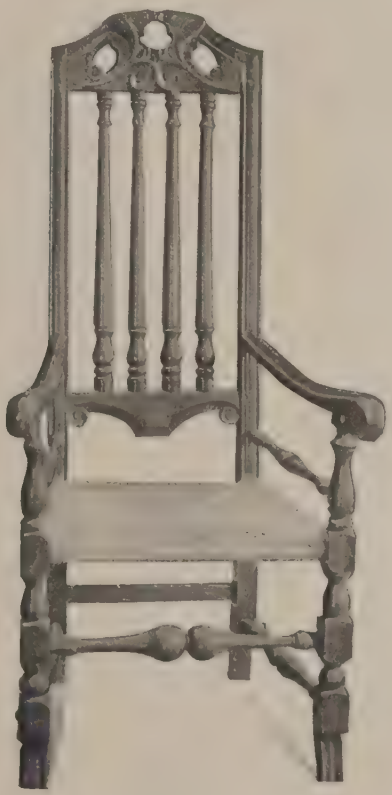


Figure 110.
Banister-back, 1710–20.

Another form of chair which had survived from an earlier period was the banister-back chair; a very early example of one, belonging to the Connecticut Historical Society, is shown in Figure 110. It will be seen at a glance that it is a modification of the cane chairs, combining both the Flemish and Spanish styles in the back, while the under part is decidedly Spanish. The four spindles, curved on the front side and flat on the back, take

the place of the cane or leather back, and the carved underbrace of the cane chairs is supplanted by a simple turned one.

Figure 111, belonging to Mr. L. A. Lockwood, shows the same general outline as the preceding, but there is no carving on the top rail of the back, and the posts are turned in a simple design.

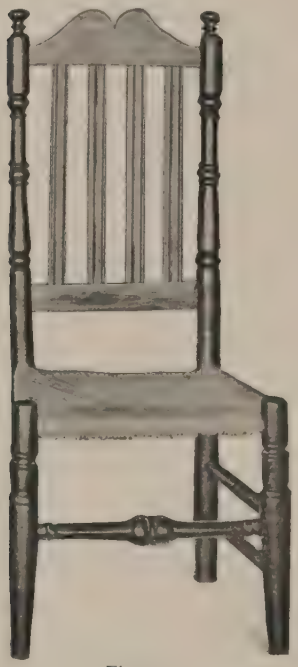


Figure 111.
Banister-back, 1730–40.

Figure 112.
Banister-back, 1740–50.

Figure 112 shows a splendid example of an armed banister-back chair of a little later date, belonging to Mr. Albert H. Pitkin, of Hartford.

These banister-back chairs, as well as the slat-backs above shown, are usually found painted a dull black and have rush seats.

Another chair was the "roundabout" or "corner chair." This cannot be called a different style, for it is found in almost all the styles

with which it is contemporaneous, from the turned chair down through the Chippendale period, and differed only in the arrangement of the seat and legs, which were so placed that a leg came in the middle of the front and back.

Figure 113.

Roundabout Chair, showing Spanish Foot, about 1720–30.

Figure 113 is an early example of this style, showing a modification of the Spanish foot in front. It is in the possession of Mrs. W. W. Andrews, of Wethersfield, Connecticut.

We now come to the first of the two styles which are distinctly new with this period.

The most characteristic chair, and the one which marked the beginning of a change of style almost as radical as had been the Flemish, and which was destined eventually to supersede it and, after playing an important part in this period, to serve as the outline for many of the most beautiful chairs of the Chippendale period, was the Dutch cabriole- or bandy-legged chair. So far as we can find, although the leg had become popular in the high and low chests of drawers a

little earlier, it does not seem to have affected, to any great extent, the form of chairs until the early part of the eighteenth century, and by many the chair is called Queen Anne. Its distinguishing features

Figure 114.

Dutch Chairs with Underbrace, 1710–30.

were the bandy leg, often with the shell ornament at the knee, the solid splat, and the broad seat.

An example of the earliest form is found in Figure 114, which probably dates between 1710 and 1730. It is in the possession of Mrs. W. W. Andrews, of Wethersfield, Connecticut. It will be noted that it still retains the underbracing so common in the preceding period.

Figure 115 is a radical departure from the laws of construction hitherto observed in that the underbracing is entirely missing, although otherwise the chair is identical with Figure 114. These belonged to Dr. Ezekiel Porter, dating about 1730, and are now in the possession of his descendant, Miss Bidwell.

Figure 116 is a very fine specimen of a roundabout chair in this style, belonging to Mr. Albert H. Pitkin. The extended top is not at all common, by far the larger number of roundabout chairs being without it.

Figure 115.

Dutch Chairs, about 1730.

Figure 117 shows a rather unusual variation of these chairs, which, it will be observed, are partly turned; but the outlines are regular, except that the legs are straight instead of bandied, although they end in the proper Dutch foot. Such chairs are more commonly found in the Dutch settlements than elsewhere. These chairs belong to the writer, having been found at Flatbush, Long Island.

Figure 118 is the plain and very common chair of the period, of which probably no family was without an example. These chairs could date almost anywhere in this period.

As the century advanced the Queen Anne chair became more ornate; the splat now was often pieced or slightly carved, the shell appeared on the knee, centre of front and back, and the foot ended

in the ball-and-claw, clearly preparing the way for the still more elaborate designs of Chippendale.

The ball-and-claw foot began to appear in the inventories about 1737; at that date, at Boston, "6 crow foot chairs" are mentioned, and, in 1750, "7 chairs with eagle feet and shells on the knee," and

Figure 116.

Dutch Roundabout Chair, Extension Top, about 1730–40.

at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1745, "claw foot" furniture of various kinds is mentioned; but ten years can safely be deducted from that date to determine when the style appeared. There is a set of side-chairs and a double chair in the Pendleton collection, undoubtedly made by Grinling Gibbons, which have a most elaborate ball-and-lion-claw foot, while the general style follows the lines of the Queen Anne chairs; and as Gibbons died in 1720, ball-and-claw is of an earlier date than that. Dr. Lyon shows that the ball-and-claw was

Figure 117.

Dutch Chairs with Rush Seats, about 1740.

Figure 118.

Simple Dutch Chairs, common throughout eighteenth century.

an adaptation of the Chinese design of the dragon grasping the pearl; but the ball-and-claw seems to have been made in two styles,

the lion-claw on the ball, such as appears on the sofa shown in Figure 180, and the eagle or other bird's claw on a ball — the latter, of course, being the one which suggests the dragon and pearl. The former style, with the lion-foot, is much more common in England than here, and appears on English pieces of this period, as well as in many of the finer Chippendale chairs.

Figure 119.

Figure 120.

Figure 121.

Dutch Chairs, dating about 1740.

Figure 119 is made of Virginia walnut, and shows a splat slightly elaborated, while the feet have traces of carving suggesting the ball-and-claw foot. Figure 120 has a veneer of walnut, and is an example of a slightly pieced splat, while Figure 121 is quite elaborate, made of mahogany, with carved shell and ball-and-claw feet. Figures 119 and 121 belong to Mr. William Meggat, and Figure 120 belongs to Mr. Walter Hosmer.

Figure 122 illustrates an elaborate form of this chair, which, though without carving, has a fineness of design not found in the earlier pieces.

We begin early in this period to find mention of easy-chairs, and as they are inventoried much higher than the other chairs we con-

clude that they were rather scarce, and belonged only to persons of means. They, too, cannot be called a new style, for we find them in Flemish, Dutch, Chippendale, and Hepplewhite designs, covering a period of a hundred years. They appear in the inventories among

Figure 122.

Dutch Chair, about 1740.

the chamber furniture: in New York, 1708, "an easy chair lined with red £2 10s"; in Boston, 1712, "an easy chair £1"; and in 1713 another for £4; at Philadelphia, in 1720, "an easie chair £7 10s."

The earlier form of this chair had the Flemish feet and bracing, one of which we have found in England; but the earliest we have found in this country appears in Figure 123, dating about 1740, which is doubtless like many of this period, with ball-and-claw feet and underbracing. It has descended to Miss Bidwell, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, from Dr. Ezekiel Porter.

The wood of which the earlier chairs of this period were made are maple, Virginia and black walnut, and cherry; but it was during this time that mahogany came into general use. It had, apparently, been occasionally used for furniture in the South from the beginning of the

Figure 123.

Cabriole-legged Cosey-chair, 1730–40.

century, but does not seem to have reached the North until some years later. From 1748 on it appears in the Boston inventories, and through those of 1755 and 1756 it appears to have been in common use, there being hardly an inventory which does not contain some piece made of that wood.

We now come to the second style new in this period. The Windsor chair, which tradition says received its name from having

been found by one of the Georges in a peasant's hut near that place, at any rate so far as this country is concerned seems, contrary to current belief, to have come from the South. Philadelphia has the earliest records of Windsor chairs, and they were in use there about 1725, and as the records farther south and north do not mention them until many years later, it is fair to assume that they were first used there. The following advertisement at New York, in 1763, also seems to indicate their origin: "Philadelphia-made Windsor chairs."

From the time of their introduction well into the nineteenth century they appear to have been the most common and popular of all styles of chairs, and we find them advertised for sale in New York as late as 1800, and frequently mentioned in inventories even of later date; in fact, they still hold their place, having survived as the piazza and kitchen chairs of to-day.

They were comparatively easy and inexpensive to make, and were more useful than the heavier Queen Anne piece with which they were contemporaneous, and more comfortable than the other common form shown in Figure 118. They were, in fact, the every-day chair of the period.

These chairs were made of a variety of woods, sometimes several kinds in one piece, but they were commonly made of hickory and ash.

The English Windsor chairs differ from those found in this country in that they usually have a solid or pieced splat in the centre of the back, with the spindles on either side.

American Windsor chairs are found in several forms, one having straight spindles across the back, with a projection to act as a head-rest, as in the rocking-chair shown in Figure 124, but often this additional piece was missing. The additional piece at the top gives this chair the name of comb-back.

Another more beautiful form is shown in Figure 125, where the curve of the back is bent into the arms, and the back is supported by two spindle braces fastened into an extension of the seat.

Figure 124.

Windsor Rocking-chair, latter half eighteenth century.

Figure 125.

Windsor Arm- and Side-chairs, latter half eighteenth century.

A third form, called the fan-back, is shown in Figure 126. It doubtless derives its name from the graceful curve of the back. The chairs shown in the last two figures are in the possession of the Hon. John R. Buck, of Hartford.

The rarest form of this chair is shown in Figure 127.

Figure 126.

Fan-back Windsor Chairs, latter half eighteenth century.

This writing-chair carries out the general lines of Figure 125, and in addition has the large desk-arm. There is a drawer under the arm, and a slide in front for the candle, and another drawer under the seat. It is made of a variety of woods, the bent pieces being of hickory, the spindles of ash, the front of the drawers of mahogany, and the desk-arm and seat of birch. This piece is in the author's possession, and at one time belonged to the first Congregational minister of Chesterfield, Massachusetts, and was not new in 1790. Such a piece is doubtless referred to in a Boston inventory of 1760, "a writing chair 2s 8d." One can hardly realize from the illustration how comfortable and convenient it is both for reading and writing,

Figure 127.

Windsor Writing-chair, 1760–80.

and much of the present volume was written on its arm, while the drawers provided a convenient place for the note-books.

The arms of Windsor chairs were sometimes carved at the ends, either to represent a closed or an open hand. Pieces of this description are not very common, and are highly prized.

Figure 128.

Windsor Chair showing Carved Arms, last quarter eighteenth century.

Figure 128 is a good example of the latter sort, and all four fingers and thumb can be plainly seen. It belongs to Mr. Albert H. Pitkin, of Hartford.

We do not find a single reference to rocking-chairs in any of the inventories. Yet it is generally supposed that they have existed from the middle of the eighteenth century, if not longer, and, in fact, it is difficult to understand why the chair is not a great deal older than that date, for the idea of rockers on cradles was well known to the colonists from the first. We are, however, of the opinion that they are of a comparatively modern date, and we have never seen one which

could, with any degree of certainty, be placed earlier than Revolutionary times; for, in our experience, without exception, the pieces of the earlier designs having rockers have, when it is possible to trace them back, had rockers added within the last hundred years, and this experience seems to be that of all the collectors approached on the subject.

The rocking-chair is probably indigenous to this country, and even to this day it is recognized as an American idiosyncrasy.

It is often difficult to determine whether a piece was originally a rocker or not, and the writer knows of no infallible rule for the protection of the public; we believe that they can usually be distinguished from the firm chairs by the fact that they have a single underbrace high up the leg instead of a double brace, but this rule could only apply, of course, to the double-braced style of chair.

We have never found a genuine rocking-chair in a style earlier than the slat-back and the common variations of the Dutch, although there is a Flemish chair with rockers at the Connecticut Historical Society's rooms, and another at the Museum at Concord; but these clearly have been cut down and had rockers added at a later date.

Rocking-chairs had no distinctive style of their own, but were merely adaptations from the prevailing ones, the commonest by far being in the Windsor style.

FOURTH PERIOD — 1750–1840

The period now under consideration is marked by an extravagance of taste and fluctuation of fashions never before attained, which were primarily due to the great and sudden increase of wealth in the colonies and in England. The furniture was drawn exclusively from English models down to the introduction of the Empire style, and in their eagerness for something new, the people, following the English fashions, rushed from the plain, stately pieces of the Queen Anne period to the rococo French designs of Chippendale; then, tiring of that,

back to the classic for a brief time under Adam; then, in a revolt against the heavy pieces of Chippendale, to the over-light and perishable pieces of Hepplewhite and Shearer; then on to the gaudily painted pieces of Sheraton, who, under the stress of public taste, at last succumbed to the Empire style and sank into a mere copyist of the French school. Such is, in brief, the history of the chairs of this period.

This fickleness was, of course, felt more in the cities than in the country, where we often find two and even three of these styles existing side by side, equally popular.

Chippendale's designs remained popular longer than any of the others, and from the following coincidence we are able to determine fairly closely when the change took place.

In Wethersfield, Connecticut, were two men in good circumstances, one married in 1791, the other in 1799, and each furnished his house in the prevailing fashion. The furniture bought in 1791 is Chippendale in character entirely, while that bought in 1799 had not a single example of that style, but was entirely Sheraton. This would seem to indicate that the Chippendale style gave way to the Sheraton somewhere between those two dates, although, of course, we find at a much earlier date Sheraton pieces, as in the Nichols house at Salem, built and furnished in 1783 almost entirely in Sheraton style, with but little of the Chippendale; and the furniture used by General Washington when President in 1789, and now preserved in the City Hall, New York, is pure Sheraton in style.

It is of the greatest service, in placing the date of a chair, to be able to tell with a degree of accuracy under the style of which cabinet-maker it falls, and we are of the opinion that the safest guide to follow is the general outline of the backs. There are, of course, a few instances where a piece will combine two styles, or perhaps be such that no single rule will enable one to determine; but these are the rare exception, and the following will be

found to be the almost universally true characteristics of the various styles. Figure 129 shows the backs of the four different styles.

A shows the Dutch back. It will be noted that the top curves down to the upright pieces forming the back, so that they appear to

Figure 129.

be one piece. This will universally be found true in the Dutch chairs, either in this form or in its modification shown in Figure 117.

B is Chippendale in its simplest form. It will be seen that it differs from the Dutch in that the top rail is bow shape, and the ends of the top curve up instead of down, and the centre is a rising curve. This form has infinite variations, and occasionally the ends drop, but never to form an unbroken line with the sides, and there is usually a centre rise.

C is Hepplewhite. These chairs are very easily distinguished, as the back is always either heart, shield, or oval in shape, and there are but few variations.

D is Sheraton, the general characteristic of the backs being that they are rectangular in shape, the upper edge often being raised in the centre, and sometimes curved instead of straight. They never have a simple splat to form the back, which never joins the seat, but is supported by a cross-rail.

By bearing these figures in mind, and allowing for the variations, one can readily tell at a glance under which of these influences a given piece falls.

Chippendale, for the most part, copied the French, not so closely, however, but that he could adapt the Dutch bandy leg, splat, broad seat, and shell ornamentation of the Queen Anne period; and this he did so successfully that he made a style which was English and distinctly his own.

As to when Chippendale's influence first began to be felt, it is, of course, difficult to determine, for his name is not mentioned, so far as we have been able to find, until the time his published designs appeared in 1753; but judging from the spirit in which the "Director" was written, and the extremely well-made copper-plates with which it was illustrated, and the price at which it sold, it must be that he had before that time established his reputation. The people in the South, at that time wealthy, and importing as they did from the London market, probably had examples of his handicraft about the same time that they did in London, which may have been as early as 1735. On the whole, however, we think the conservative date of 1750 is the safest, at which time his influence must have become somewhat general. In 1755, at Yorktown, record was made of "2 carved mahogany chairs, 40s"; and in 1760, at Boston, we find mention in the inventories of "6 mahogany chairs £4 10s," and in 1774 of "8 carved mahogany chairs £16 6s," which were undoubtedly in Chippendale designs.

Chippendale's published designs for chairs show no ball-and-claw feet, but instead the French foot, which he made every effort to popularize. There are, however, chairs made with ball-and-claw feet which reliable tradition ascribes to him, and the explanation doubtless is that he made what was desired to order.

English Chippendale chairs, as a rule, are larger than the American-made chairs, and excel them in every way. There were no chairs made here which approach, either in design or workmanship, the examples of Chippendale chairs in the collections of Mr. George S. Palmer, of Norwich, and Mr. C. L. Pendleton, of Providence. The

great fault of the American makers was disregard of a fineness of detail, which makes a vast difference in the finished product. The backs are often handsomely carved, but the legs are so plain and the rails so wide as to give a board effect to the lower portion of the chair, which entirely ruins the fine effect obtained in the back.

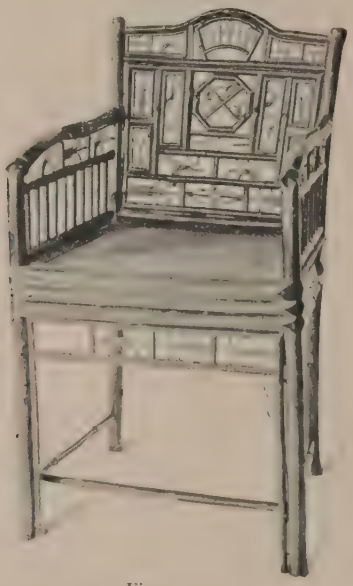


Figure 130.
Chinese Chair, about 1800.

Just as, a half-century before, the Dutch, then the controllers of the Eastern trade, had borrowed the ball-and-claw foot from the Chinese, so now Chippendale borrowed extensively from other Chinese designs for English use. The cabinet-makers of his day seem to have doubted the practicality of many of Chippendale's designs, especially those in the Gothic and Chinese styles, for in his preface Chippendale, referring to these designs as "fit for eating parlours," says: "Upon the whole I have given no design but what may be executed with advantage by the hands of a skilful workman, though

some of the profession have been diligent enough to represent them (especially those after the Gothick and Chinese manner) as so many specious drawings, impossible to be worked off by any mechanick whatsoever. I will not scruple to attribute this to malice, ignorance and inability; and I am confident I can convince all noblemen, gentlemen, or others, who will honour me with their commands, that

Figure 131.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 132.
Chippendale Chair.

every design in the book can be improved, both as to beauty and enrichment in the execution of it, by their most obedient servant Thomas Chippendale." Quite a number of chairs in the Gothic and Chinese style found their way to this country, especially about the seaports of New England, and the late Professor Marsh had a very good example of a chair in Chinese design in his collection. They also seem to have been made in this country, for John

Briner, a cabinet-maker at New York in 1762, advertises to make "Gothic and Chinese chairs."

Figure 130 is an example of a Chinese chair brought from China by a sea-captain about a hundred years ago, and is a good example

Figure 133.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 134.
Chippendale Chair.

of the style of chair from which Chippendale took his pattern. It belongs to the writer.

The earlier chairs made here from his designs seem to have had plain splats and ball-and-claw feet, probably a transition from the Dutch chairs of the last period, and it was not until considerably later that the straight-leg chair came into general use. This is contrary to current belief, but extensive observation of pieces whose dates are well authenticated shows that the straight leg in any other design than Gothic or Chinese came some years later than the cabriole-legged Chippendale piece.

Figure 131 shows a web-foot chair with splat unpierced, belonging to Mr. Meggat. Figures 132 and 133, with ball-and-claw feet and shell carving, show, in the former a simple pierced splat, and in the latter one of more elaborate design. All three resemble the Dutch chairs, except that the top bars at the back show the Chippendale characteristics. Figure 134 shows one with a slightly more elaborate back, but with plain bandy legs, and this pattern is well known both in Dutch and straight-legged Chippendale styles as well. Figure 132 belongs to Mr. Meggat, Figure 133 to the Hon. John R. Buck, and Figure 134 to Mr. F. O. Pierce, of Brooklyn.

Figure 135.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 136.
Chippendale Chair.

Figures 135 and 136 show still more elaborate splats. Figure 135 has an underbrace, which is unusual in a Chippendale ball-and-claw-foot chair. It belongs to Mr. Meggat. Chairs resembling Figure 136 are sometimes still further carved, and the little projections at the top on either side of the splat are carved to represent

tassels, thus carrying out the drapery effect which is suggested in this piece. A set of such chairs is in the Bulkeley collection.

Figure 137.
Chippendale Roundabout Chair.

Figures 137 and 138 are examples of two Chippendale roundabout chairs; the splats of both follow well-known Chippendale designs, Figure 137 following the design shown in Figure 134, and Figure 138 suggests that shown in Figure 152.

Figure 138.
Chippendale Roundabout Chair, Extension Top.

Figure 139, belonging to Mr. Meggat, would seem to be an exception to the rules above laid down, but the splat is unmistakably Chippendale, and the upper rail of the back is a whim of the maker. Figure 140 is an unusual design in the writer's possession, made of Virginia ironwood, and its proportions are particularly good. At the bend of the knee the wood is 2½ inches thick.

Figure 141 illustrates an arm-chair in almost faultless proportions as to height, breadth, and the curve of the arms, and the pat-

Figure 139.

Figure 140.

Figure 141.

Chairs in Chippendale Style.

tern of the back is not common, the only criticism being that the front rail is perhaps too broad.

Figure 142 shows an arm-chair more elaborate than any of those preceding it in that its beauty is not dependent solely upon the out-

Figure 142.

Chippendale Chair.

lines, but the flat surfaces of the back, arms, and legs are broken by relief-carving. This carving is found on all of the best-made Chippendale chairs, and is employed on nearly all of the chairs given in "The Gentleman's and Cabinet-Maker's Director," although much the larger proportion of chairs following Chippendale's outlines in this country are without it. This chair belongs to Miss Augusta Manning, of Hartford. It will be seen that the design is an elaboration of that shown in Figure 134, and is almost identical with that shown in Figure 150. This chair and that shown in Figure 150 well

illustrate how an elaborate design was simplified from lack of skill or to meet the requirements of economy.

Figure 143.
Chippendale Chair.

Figures 143 and 144 show two chairs of a higher order and better finish than is usual in American-made chairs. The legs of both, though straight, suggest Chinese patterns so much used by Chippendale, and the chairs date probably as early as the bandy-legged ones. Figure 144 is especially beautiful. The design is rather unusual, and the flat surfaces, including the top of the arms, are carved in well-executed relief-carving.

Figure 144.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 145 is probably one of the most elaborate Chippendale chairs which has been found in this country dating from colonial times, and compares very favorably with some of the designs shown

CHIPPENDALE CHAIR.

(*page* 145.)

in his "Gentleman's and Cabinet-Maker's Director." The rococo effect very strongly suggests the French school, and the legs and the carved lower edge of the seat are characteristic of the finer Chippendale models. It is in the Bulkeley collection.

Figure 146.

Figure 147.

Figure 148.

Chippendale Slat-back Chairs.

We come now to a very different pattern of chair, which possibly was modeled from the old slat-back, and, like it, has the cross-slats instead of the up-and-down splat; but from the fact that the top rail follows the Chippendale lines we are led to place it under that general head.

Figures 146, 147, and 148 show its development from the plainest to one of its most beautiful patterns. We have found no example of this style with ball-and-claw foot or other than the straight foot, and are therefore inclined to place them after 1770.

The question of upholstery for Chippendale chairs is often of some moment, and it may be instructive to quote what he thought on the subject. He said: "The seats look best when stuffed over the rails, and have a brass border neatly chased; but are most commonly

done with brass nails, in one or two rows; and sometimes the nails are done to imitate fret-work. They are usually covered with the same stuff as the window curtains. The height of the back seldom exceeds twenty-two inches above the seats." And referring to his "ribband back" chairs he remarks that several sets have been made which have given entire satisfaction and that "if the seats are covered with red morocco, they will have a fine effect."

Figure 149.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 150.
Chippendale Chair.

It is worthy of note, in passing, that in the publications of all the cabinet-makers of this period the designs almost invariably show chairs without any underbracing; but, for all their endeavor to set such a fashion, the designs actually made, except the bandy leg, even including the delicate Hepplewhite pieces, for the most part had the underbracing, probably for the reason that the additional strength thus secured proved to be a necessity.

Figure 149 is an example of the plainest of the straight-legged arm-chairs. It is in the writer's possession, dating about 1790, and

was bought from a descendant of the maker. It is of rather unusual proportions, being 46½ inches high, and 24 inches wide at the front of the seat.

Figure 150 was new in 1791, being part of a wedding outfit at Wethersfield, Connecticut, and is now in the possession of a descendant, Miss Esther Bidwell of that place. It will be seen that the chair shown in Figure 150 is practically the same in design as that shown in Figure 142.

Figure 151.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 152.
Chippendale Chair.

Figure 151 shows a chair which appears to have been of a style particularly pleasing to the cabinet-makers about Hartford, for many were made there during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and in a table of prices published by the joiners at Hartford, in 1792, they advertised to make a "chair with urn'd banisters" for £1 9s., which undoubtedly refers to this design of chair.

Figure 152 shows a chair in the writer's possession in a design very popular throughout the Chippendale period. This chair was found in Vermont.

From these few designs it is not intended to portray all of the designs of the Chippendale period, for their name is legion, and a large volume could be compiled upon this subject alone, without then exhausting it. These illustrations have, however, been selected from a large number, with a view of showing the most important of the patterns rather than the most unusual.

We now come to the second of the great cabinet-designers, Hepplewhite. His influence, though very marked in other articles of furniture in this country, was not so important as either Chippendale or Sheraton as regards chairs, one reason doubtless being that his chairs lacked the enduring qualities which those of the others possessed.

Figure 153.
Hepplewhite Chair.

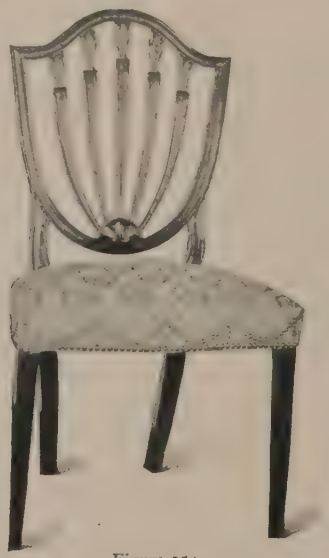


Figure 154.
Hepplewhite Chair.

It would be almost impossible to mistake his designs, for they all possess his hall-marks, either heart-, oval-, or shield-shaped backs, and his designs all have the effect of lightness and grace which made his work so famous.

While Chippendale made use of carving only, Hepplewhite often employed inlay of various woods and occasionally painting.

Figure 155.
Hepplewhite Chair.

His designs do not seem to have remained in fashion for any great length of time, and although some handsome chairs are to be found in this country which undoubtedly date from colonial times, yet for the most part the pieces found are of rather recent importation from England, where his influence was much more widely felt.

Figures 153 and 154 are two of this style belonging to Mr. Meggat. They are both well proportioned and graceful, and typical examples of the Hepplewhite chairs most often found in this country.

Figure 156.
Hepplewhite Chair.

Figure 155 is a very good example of an American Hepplewhite chair. It is interesting to observe that this chair, though apparently built with great strength, yet, because of its faulty construction, has been broken at every point where special strain has come.

Figure 156 shows a very beautiful Hepplewhite chair belonging to Mrs. Otto, of Germantown. The beauty of its lines and the well-executed carving lead us to believe it was made in England, and possibly by the great designer himself.

Figure 157.
Hepplewhite Cosey-chair.

Figure 157 is a splendid example of a Hepplewhite cosey-chair, with the arms extending inside of the tall ears. The upholstery covers the frame of the chair so completely that it must be explained that the legs and bracing are like those given in Hepplewhite's designs for cosey-chairs. This chair belongs to Miss Brown, of Salem, a descendant of the original owner.

Figure 158.

Sheraton Chairs.

Figure 159.

Sheraton Chairs.

The last of the English cabinet-makers, Thomas Sheraton, had great influence on the designs in this country, not only in chairs, but also in all other kinds of furniture.

The characteristic of his chairs, as we have seen, was that the general effect of the backs was square or rectangular, with the top bar often raised in the centre with a carved piece, or broken into several sections, and in the plainer pieces the top was perfectly straight.

Figures 158 and 159 are examples of Sheraton at his best. Figure 158 has the characteristic back, while Figure 159 shows a slight

Figure 160.
Sheraton Chair.

Figure 161.
Sheraton Chair.

modification. These are very handsome specimens, the carving being of an exceptionally high order, and the proportions perfect. A full set of each belongs to the Nichols family in Salem, Massachusetts, where they have been since they were imported from London to furnish the new house in 1783. This early date seems to indicate

that some of Sheraton's best work had been done before the publication of his book in 1791, which was undoubtedly true of all the cabinet-makers.

Figures 160 and 161 are two excellent examples of Sheraton designs, Figure 160 being particularly graceful, with the fan-like back.

Figure 162.
Sheraton Chair.

Figure 163.
Painted Sheraton Chair.

This design appears to be one of the commonest of the better Sheraton chairs, for the writer has found many of them, especially in the South. The applied moulding on the rail about the seat is not original. They both belong to Mr. Meggat.

Figure 162 is a plainer adaptation of this style, and Figure 163 is a painted chair, such as became very popular about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Figure 164 is another example of chairs in Sheraton style. We believe this modification is distinctly American. They were originally painted with a black background over which flowers in brilliant

colors and gilt were painted. The two here illustrated form a part of a dining-room set which was bought early in the nineteenth century.

About the year 1800 the style commonly called Empire began to make itself felt in England, and Sheraton adopted it in his designs,

Figure 164.

Painted Sheraton Chairs.

making chairs with lion's and bear's claws and with rolling backs suggested by some of the Egyptian bronze chairs. In this country the Empire influence was early felt, undoubtedly both because of the very friendly feeling then existing between France and the United States, and the equally hostile feeling toward the English which culminated in the War of 1812.

We therefore find a great abundance of this style of furniture in this country, which remained in fashion down to the time of machine-made furniture.

Figure 165, with its carved legs and feet, was made by a cabinet-maker named Phyfe, who had a shop at 35 Partition Street, now Fulton Street, New York, and advertised his furniture in the papers

from 1802 to 1810. It clearly shows the influence of the Empire style both in shape and in the brass inlaying on the rail at the top of the

Figure 165.
Phyfe Chair.

Figure 166.
Empire Chair.

Figure 167.
Empire Chairs.

back and on the cross-slat. The feet are dainty and well carved. It is in the possession of Mr. Meggat.

Figure 166 shows the early Empire style as it became modified in this country, and shows the Sheraton influence in the painted lyre on the back, which was one of the hall-marks of Sheraton's later designs. The slat is also painted in fruit designs.

Figure 167 shows two styles of the parlor chairs of our grandmothers' day, which remained in style up to, and indeed later than, 1840. The one to the right has the back and legs made of the same piece, while the other shows a construction where the legs are made separate from the back. The former method of construction makes a stronger and more desirable chair. They clearly have the Empire pieces as their model, and it is amusing to see how the "antique dealers" are to-day advertising such pieces as colonial, when most of them were new within the memory of some of the readers.

VI

SETTLES, COUCHES, AND SOFAS

SETTLES

THE settle seems to have been a direct evolution from the chest. W. H. Pollen, in his book on furniture, says: "As the tops of coffers served for seats, they began in the thirteenth century to be furnished with panelled backs and arms." At any rate, we find beautiful examples of carved settles in England, dating through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A glance at Figure 168 will clearly show how close the settle resembles a chest. The lower part of this piece has all the characteristics of a chest, including the lifting top, and the three panels are carved in the same manner and design as are found in chests. The two end stiles are extended to support the arms, and the seat is panelled. The back is divided into three panels, as is the lower part, and the centre panel closely resembles that found below. The top of the back is finished in the fashion of the wainscot chairs, as are also the arms. Many familiar patterns are found in the carving on this settle, most of them of the early period, as, for instance, the two centre panels, and especially the two inside stiles on both top and bottom. The panelled seat suggests that the settle must have been used with a cushion. The piece seems to be made of American oak, and was found at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where it had been used in

a stable to hold salt for cattle. It dates in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and is now in the Bulkeley collection.

Settles are mentioned in the inventories of this country from the very first. We find one mentioned in Boston, in 1643, and at York-

Figure 168.

Carved Oak Settle, latter half seventeenth century.

town, in 1647, "1 long wainscott settle"; at Philadelphia, in 1706, "1 settle 17s"; and again in 1720, "1 long settle 14s"; and at Providence, in 1712, "1 settle 9s."

Such handsome settles as that shown in the last figure were extremely rare in this country, the settle commonly in use being similar to the one shown in Figure 169. It is made of pine, with high back, and the front extends nearly to the floor, thus forming an effective screen against the cold winter winds; for it was the custom to draw these settles up close to the large open fire, usually in the kitchen, thus making a sort of little inner warm room. This settle is

owned by Mrs. W. W. Andrews, in whose family it has always been. These settles are sometimes furnished with a small shelf fastened in the centre of the back to hold a candle.

Figure 169.

Pine Settle, first half eighteenth century.

Settles of this type were in use in this country for a long period, from the very earliest times down to about 1760, and were, many of them, more carefully made than Figure 169, being of oak and often panelled.

When the wainscot chair went out of fashion, and the square-back chair with turned feet and bracing took its place, the settle, which in its more pretentious form could perhaps be called a double chair or settee of the wainscot type, was superseded, except for kitchen

Figure 170.

Turned Settee with Turkey-work Upholstery, about 1660.

use, by the upholstered settee in the fashion of the Turkey-work chairs so commonly in use in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Figure 170 shows a settee now in the possession of the Essex Institute, Salem, in the exact style of the chair of the period dating about 1660. It is upholstered, as were the chairs, in Turkey-work.

Figure 171.

Dutch Double Chair, 1740–50.

Again, when the turned chair was followed by the finely carved cane chair, this fashion was followed in settees; and though we have never seen one in this country, they may have been here, and there is in England a suit of furniture in this Flemish style, made for the Princess Anne in 1680, which has a settee constructed like a double chair, the legs and bracing of which are very similar to the couch shown in Figure 176.

Figure 171 is an example of a Queen Anne double chair in the possession of Dr. J. Sherman Wight, Jr., of Brooklyn. It dates about 1740–50. It is in reality two chairs, with a carved brace between the two backs to give additional strength and finish. It is made of cherry, and is an excellent example of the double chair of that day.

This method of making seats for more than one was used also during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and such pieces are to be found following the designs of Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton.

A double chair in Chippendale design, which is owned by the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts, is shown in Figure 172. These chairs are not at all common in this country, and most of them found here were imported, and have come from the South, although a few plain straight-legged ones are to be found in New England.

This double chair is a particularly fine specimen, and was, without doubt, made in England.

The feature to note especially is the lion's-claw-and-ball foot, which is rarely, if ever, found on American-made pieces, although it had been a favorite design in England for the finer chairs from the time of Grinling Gibbons, early in the eighteenth century, down through that of Chippendale. The knees are finished with grotesque faces of men, a design which Chippendale seldom used, although it had been used in some of the Queen Anne pieces. The arms end in a dragon's or snake's head. This double chair is supposed to have been owned by John Hancock.

Another piece which once belonged to John Hancock, and which is now at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, is shown in Figure 173, and is an example of an upholstered settee of the same general character. It is made of walnut, and follows very closely the outlines of some of the upholstered chairs given in Chippendale's "Director," although the underbracing would seem earlier. The feet are decidedly on the

CHIPPENDALE DOUBLE CHAIR.

(*Figure 172.*)

Figure 173.

Upholstered Settee, latter half eighteenth century.

order of the Louis XV style, which Chippendale often copied. It is extremely long, being practically four large chairs placed side by side, but is saved from being awkward by its graceful lines.

Figure 174.

Sheraton Double Chair, 1780–1800.

There is a Hepplewhite settee made to fit a circular hall at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. His designs, however, being so frail, were not well adapted to support the necessary strain, and consequently few Hepplewhite settees are to be found in this country.

Figure 174 shows a double chair belonging to Mr. Luke A. Lockwood, following a very popular Sheraton design found in both arm- and side-chairs.

Figure 175 shows a triple chair, in the writer's possession, in what we call American Sheraton design, and is much like the chairs shown in Figure 164. It is painted black, and the spindles and frame are enlivened with flowers in gilt, a few of which may still be seen in the illustration. Such pieces date early in the nineteenth century.

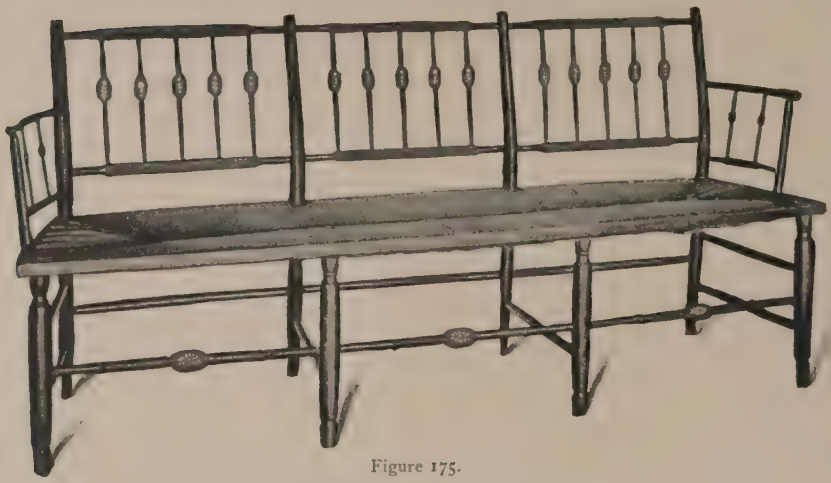


Figure 175.

American Sheraton Settee, 1800–20.

COUCHES

As the settles and double chairs were pieces on which to sit, so couches were intended to lie upon, and as they are to be found in almost all the designs for chairs, from the turned variety through the Empire style, they very evidently formed parts of sets with their corresponding chairs. To substantiate this the inventories show: at Boston, 1702, "7 cane chairs, 1 couch & squab"; in the same year, "1 Doz. cane chairs with black frames 1 couch ditto"; at Philadelphia, 1686, "1 cane couch & 8 cane chairs."

As might be expected from the character of the settlements, and from the fact that the couches were placed at high valuations, they appear first and more frequently in the South — in fact, they were very common throughout the South, as many as twenty-two being mentioned in the inventories at Yorktown between 1645 and 1670. At Yorktown, in 1647, "1 old turned couch" is mentioned, which would indicate that the piece was of considerably earlier date than the entry, and another is mentioned in an inventory of 1645. We do not find

couches inventoried among the more sturdy New-Englanders earlier than the inventory of John Cotton, of Boston, in 1652.

After that date we find them occasionally mentioned in the North and frequently in the South, but the descriptions give little aid in determining their character. At Yorktown, in 1658, mention is made of "a skin couch"; in 1659, "a wainscoate couch"; in 1667, "1 couch cubbard." At New York, in 1691, we find "3 couches £3"; at Yorktown, in 1692, "1 couch Turkey worked 10s"; at Boston, in 1698, "an old couch," in 1700, "a red couch," and in 1709, "one couch covered"; at Philadelphia, in 1686, "1 cane couch £1," and in 1706, "1 good cane couch £2"; at Providence, in 1732, "an old couch £2."

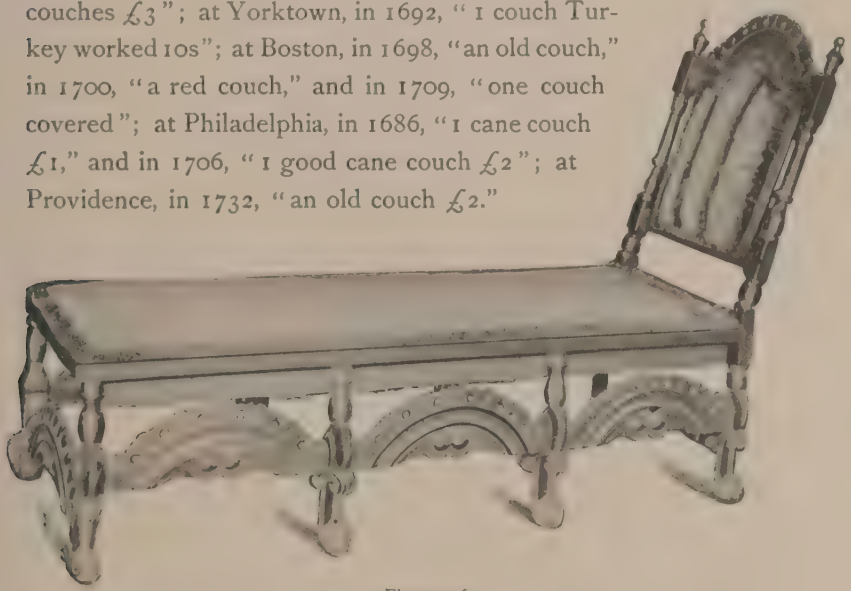


Figure 176.

Flemish Couch, latter half seventeenth century.

(Seat and back originally cane.)

These early couches were really long chairs; that is, they were without backs on the long side, while on one end there was a back similar to a chair-back of the period to which it belongs, with three pairs of front feet, making an elongated chair.

Figure 176 shows an example of what was referred to in the inventories as a cane couch. It will be observed that it is pure

Flemish in style, with the scroll feet and carved underbrace, and originally the seat and the centre of the back were cane, and the head-piece was movable, held at any angle desired by chains, as in the next figure. Such pieces are still occasionally found here, but the end piece is rarely so high, and many which we have seen do not have the carved brace at the end, although it appears on the sides. Another point to note is that the scroll feet turn outward instead of inward in this pure Flemish style, which is more fully discussed in the chapter on Chairs.

This very handsome piece is in the possession of Mr. F. O. Pierce, of Brooklyn, in whose family it has always been, having been brought to this country direct from Holland by an ancestor named Lynde in the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is one of the best pieces of this general character we have found in this country.

There are a number of specimens of couches in the Dutch style, with six bandy legs and plain feet, extant, one of which, dating about 1740–50, is in the collection of Mr. Henry W. Erving.

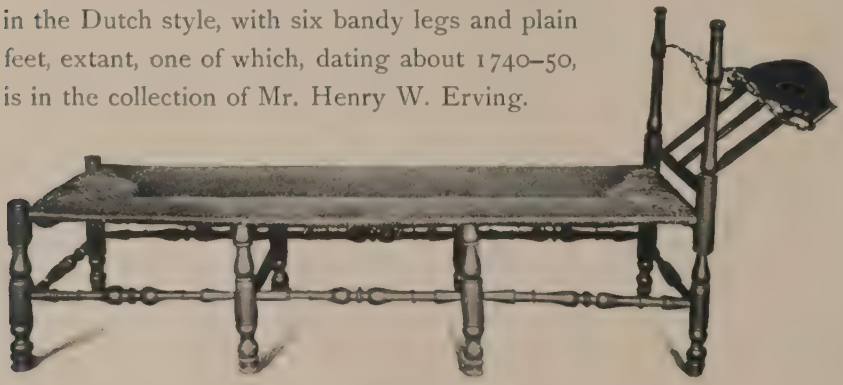


Figure 177.

Rush-bottom Couch, 1730–40.

Figure 177 is an example of a couch after the fashion of the every-day chair of the Queen Anne period, dating about 1730–40, which belongs to Mr. Meggat; such a piece may have been referred to in an inventory at Philadelphia, in 1750: "a rush bottom couch

105." It will be noted that the head-rest is arranged with a chain to raise or lower to the proper height for the comfort of the user; and the seat is of rush, although such pieces are occasionally found covered with leather.

Figure 178 is a very beautiful example of a Chippendale couch or long chair in the possession of Mr. Walter Hosmer. The back will be recognized as being in one of the characteristic Chippendale designs, and the six ball-and-claw feet are in splendid proportion. The seat is of canvas, laced over wooden knobs fastened to the side rail after the fashion of many bedsteads

Figure 178.

Chippendale Couch, 1760–70.

of the period, and it is intended, of course, for a thin mattress. We should date it about 1760–70.

Such couches are more often found with the plain straight legs than with the cabriole legs and ball-and-claw feet.

Figure 179 is a French *chaise-longue* which belonged originally to Mr. Joseph Bonaparte and came from his house at Bordentown, New Jersey. It is now in the writer's possession. It is made of beautifully selected mahogany, and the carved bear's or lion's feet are unusually well executed. The arms are of brass, and the side rails

are enriched with diamond-shaped panels, marked off by a raised beading of ebony, and in the centre of each panel, graduating in size as the panel becomes smaller at the rolling ends, is a rosette of ebony. A large rosette of ebony finishes the four ends, and four ebony lions' heads finish where the legs join the frame. The design found on the rails as here described appears in some of both Hepplewhite and

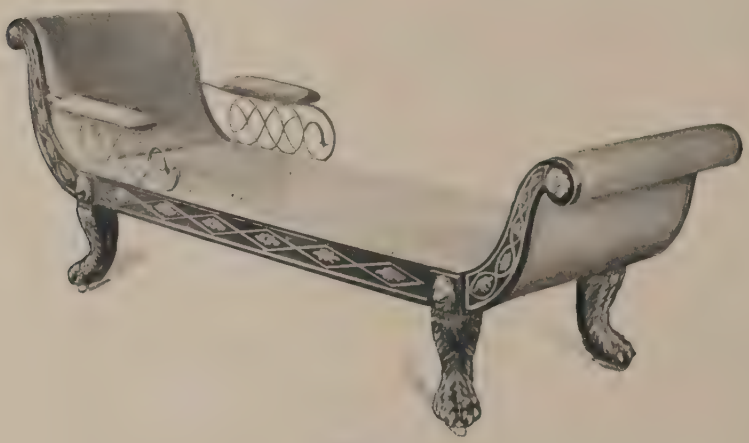


Figure 179.

Chaise-longue, about 1800.

Sheraton designs. The seat is of cane covered with a thin layer of hair. This piece, when found, was in a very dilapidated condition; but, fortunately, at least one rosette of each size was preserved, as well as the brass arms, and the piece has consequently been restored to look as it originally did. It dates probably early in the nineteenth century.

SOFAS

We now come to a kind of furniture which differs from the settle and double chair in that it is not suggestive, nor does it follow the designs of any kind of chair. It is of rather recent invention, at least so far as England and this country are concerned, not having

Figure 180.

Chippendale Sofa, 1760-80.

appeared until Chippendale's time, and not being at all common until Sheraton's time, for Cowper, in "The Task," written in 1781, speaks of sofas as novelties. Chippendale gives several designs for such pieces, calling them French sofas, and the next cabinet-maker to use them to any extent was Sheraton; but by far the largest number of sofas extant are in the familiar Empire designs.

Figure 180 shows a very beautiful sofa preserved at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, and at one time the property of George Washington. It will at once be seen to have the lion's-claw-and-ball feet such as are seen in the double chair numbered 172. In general shape it is like the designs given for sofas in Chippendale's "Director," and the rococo carving on the bends of the legs places it beyond question

Figure 181.

Sheraton Sofa, about 1800.

in that style. The rear legs are slightly cabriole in shape, which is a feature of English pieces, and characteristic of the better chairs of both Chippendale and the period preceding him. The sofa is now covered with haircloth, probably not the original covering.

Figure 181 is a Sheraton sofa which was purchased in 1799 and is now in the possession of Mrs. W. W. Andrews. The slender fluted legs are characteristic. Many sofas of this kind were owned in this country, some being elaborately inlaid in the fashion of the Sheraton desks and sideboards.

After 1800, sofas, together with furniture of all kinds, followed the Empire style. Figure 182 is a sofa, dating about 1810–20,

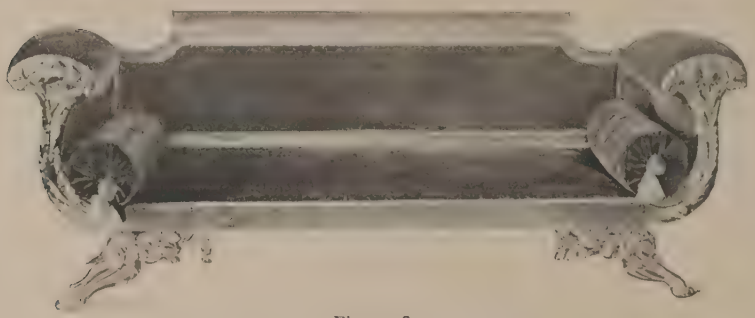


Figure 182.

Empire Cornucopia Sofa, 1810–20.

commonly called a cornucopia sofa, so named from the shape and carving of the arms. The round pillows shown at the ends of this sofa, and commonly provided with the long Empire sofas, are a revival of a very old fashion. The cane couches, which were in use from 1680 to 1730, were provided with just such pillows, which are termed in the inventories "squabs." The finer Empire sofas had the rails carved, and occasionally the back was finished in a broken arch.

Figure 183 is an example of another sofa of about the same date, without the cornucopia ends, the feet having very handsomely carved wings and claws. It belongs to the Misses Brown, of Salem.

Figure 184 shows another example of an Empire sofa very common in the South, one end being arranged to sit at, and the other end forming a pillow or squab on which to recline, thus making a

piece of furniture more comfortable and serviceable than the two sofas last illustrated.

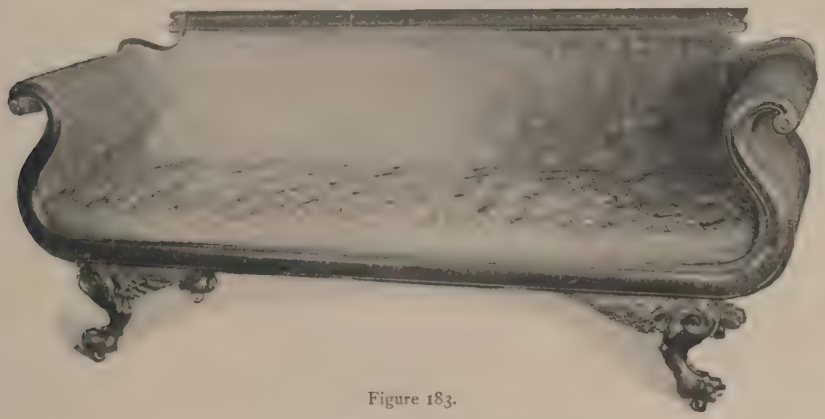


Figure 183.

Empire Sofa, 1810–20.

Such pieces as the three last mentioned were extremely popular in America during the first years of the nineteenth century, and con-

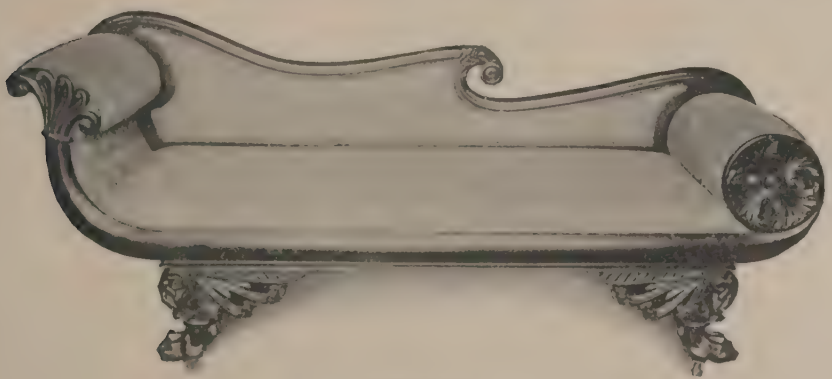


Figure 184.

Empire Sofa, 1810–20.

tinued in favor as late as 1850. Many of them were originally covered with haircloth which was bordered with brass nails.

VII

TABLES

MANY of the facts regarding chairs already noted are applicable also to tables, as almost every form of chair had its corresponding table.

During Saxon times England did not know or use the word table, but designated what the Normans called tables as "bordes," and that with reason, for their tables were long, narrow "bordes" to be placed on trestles or frames when in use, and it was not until about the year 1600 that "standing tables" and "dormant tables" are freely mentioned.

There is no doubt that the table-boards and frames found their way to this country, for the mention of them appears frequently in the inventories until the end of the seventeenth century; "1 table board and joyned frame," at Plymouth, in 1638; "1 long table board and frame," at Salem, in 1647; "a great table board and frame," at New York, in 1677; and "a table board," at Philadelphia, in 1687, are some of the items regarding them.

The boards or table-tops were sometimes supplied with hinges so that they could be folded into as small a space as possible when out of use. The frames were built in X or trestle shape, or with heavy stretchers close to the floor, the legs being sometimes slightly ornamented with carving or turning. Figure 83, which shows the long tables in Christ Church College dining-hall, Oxford, doubtless

represents very well the way the table-board and frame appeared when in use.

Tables referred to as long tables, great tables, and standing tables were probably not made with the frame separate. They are usually accompanied in the inventories with long and short forms, just such benches and tables, no doubt, as those shown in Figure 83, above referred to. At Plymouth, in 1638, there is mention of "1 table and joyned form," and in 1639, "a framed table"; at New York, in 1669, "1 longe table"; at Salem, in 1673, "a longe table and formes"; at Boston, in 1669, "1 long cedar table"; at Yorktown, in 1647, "1 long framed table"; in 1657, "1 table, 7 feet"; in 1660, "1 long table"— showing that early in the history of the colonies standing tables were also in use.

After the table became settled as a distinct piece of furniture, the devices for making it adjustable in size for various occasions came into being. The first of these devices seems to have been the drawing-table, so called because the table was furnished with leaves at the ends which drew out. These leaves were arranged to fold back on to or under the main table when not in use, and when drawn out were supported by wooden braces which drew out from the frame and held the ends firmly on a level with the table. This, however, was not always the method employed, for English drawing-tables are to be seen where, by a clever arrangement, the table is made to sink to a level with the leaves.

The frames of drawing-tables were made after the fashion prevailing in the long tables — square and plain, slightly turned, or with a huge ball or acorn forming the centre portion of the legs.

They are mentioned as follows in the inventories: at Boston, in 1653, "In the parlour, a drawing table £2"; in 1669, "A drawing table and carpett £2 10s"; and at New York, in 1697, "an oak drawing table."

Figure 185 shows a drawing-table preserved at the rooms of the

Connecticut Historical Society, which is made of English oak; and although the leaves are missing, the place they occupied shows them to have been 2 feet 6½ inches in length, while the top is 6 feet 1 inch in length and 2 feet 11⅜ inches in width. The table, therefore, when opened to its full length, would have been a little over 11 feet long.

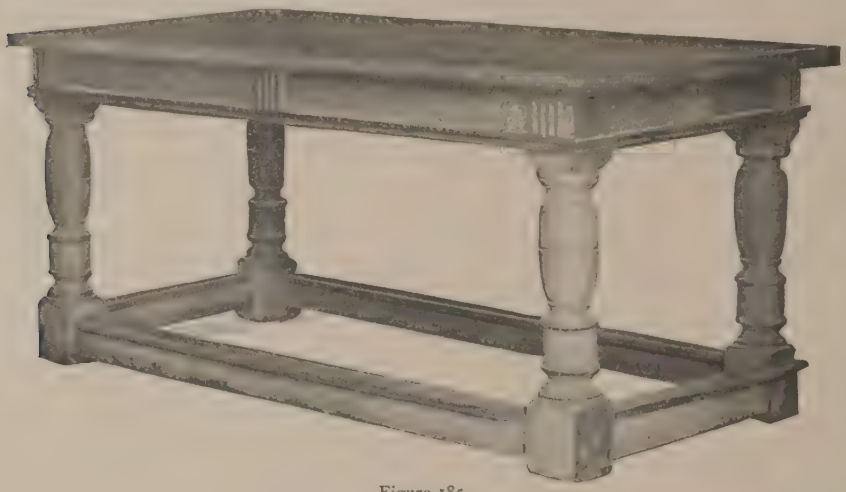


Figure 185.

Oak Drawing-table, early seventeenth century.

Drawing-tables were never common in the colonies, if we may judge from the inventories, for they are comparatively seldom mentioned.

Long tables and joined tables continue to be mentioned as late as 1775. They were, it is perhaps needless to say, the dining-tables of their day, and smaller tables made after the same fashion are occasionally found.

Carpets are frequently mentioned with the long tables, and were what we should speak of as table-covers or spreads. "A table with a table carpet," in 1690, "a long table and carpett," at Boston, in 1652, are characteristic entries.

An oak table 42 inches in length and 38 inches in width, owned by the Historical Society of Old Newbury, is shown in Figure 186. The curves into which the frame is cut, with the quaint little drop ornaments, suggest quite forcibly the Yorkshire chairs, well known

Figure 186.

Oak Table, first half seventeenth century.

to collectors, and plentiful in England during the seventeenth century. The heavy stretchers about the table near the floor are similar to those found on the wainscot chairs.

Figure 187 shows an oak table, belonging to Mr. Meggat, which represents fairly well the common tables of the seventeenth century. It was probably such tables as this that were referred to at Salem, in 1684, as a table with a drawer; at Philadelphia, in 1686, as "1 table with a drawer 6s"; at Boston, in 1709, as "a square table 2s"; in fact, there was hardly an inventory which did not contain an entry of at least one table of small valuation called "small," "square," or "short."

Figure 188 shows a table of the same order, belonging to the Bulkeley collection, which clearly shows the change from the heavily

Figure 187.

Oak Table, about 1700.

Figure 188.

Oak Table, last quarter seventeenth century.

underbraced tables to those in which a more graceful effect is obtained by making the stretchers turned instead of plain, and substi-

tuting a single brace through the centre. This same development we have noted in chairs.

Chair-tables, if treated as tables, belong to this general class, but of necessity the drawer is under the seat instead of under the

Figure 189.

Chair-table, 1660–80.

table-board, as in the preceding figure. Figure 189 shows one of these chair-tables as a table, the same piece appearing as a chair in Figure 92.

The joined or wainscot tables so far considered represent the oldest style of table to be found in this country.

The next kind of table which we shall consider is shown in Figure 190, a large walnut table with leaves, now at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth. This table, there is every reason to believe, was used by Governor Edward Winslow in the council-chamber in the year 1633. Tables of this kind sometimes had leaves both at ends and sides, supported by one or more legs which swung out from the main frame. This construction has brought about the familiar designation of "thousand-legged table." It will be seen from the illustration that

the drawer which should be at the near end of the table is missing. Nearly all of these tables, when of large size, had such a drawer on the side runners so characteristic of the seventeenth-century drawers.

Figure 191 shows a maple thousand-legged table which has been fully restored, though the parts are all original.

At Boston, in 1669, "an ovall table £3 10s"; at Philadelphia, in 1688, "a walnut table £2 10s"; at Yorktown, in 1667, "1 ovall table

Figure 190.

"Thousand-legged Table," first half seventeenth century.

with bolts & catches £3"; at Salem, in 1690, "a round black walnut table £2 5s"; at Boston, in 1699, "a walnut oval table £2"; at Philadelphia, in 1705, "a large oval table £2"; at Providence, 1727, "an ovell table £2 5s." are items which doubtless refer to tables of the thousand-legged variety. They are always valued rather high, very seldom under two pounds. These large round and oval tables superseded the long tables, and were very generally the dining-tables of their day. Their curved edges must have required the use of chairs rather than the forms used with the long tables. The inventories wherein they appear are those of the well-to-do, and they may be regarded as the fashionable dining-table of the seventeenth century. The dining-table used by the Van Cortlandt family at the manor-house, Croton-on-Hudson, New York, since early in the seventeenth century, is one very like that shown in Figure 190.

Many small tables were made with similar turned frame and bracing, and with tops both round and oval, but without leaves: at Salem, in 1647, "a little round table 7s"; at Philadelphia, in 1688, "a

Figure 191.

"Thousand-legged Table," latter half seventeenth century.

round oak table"; at New York, in 1691, "a small round table with turned feet 6s"; and at Yorktown, in 1661, "1 small round table," are references perhaps to such as these.

Folding tables are also often mentioned, and were so constructed that one half of the turned frame folded against the other, and the top fastened by hinges to the frame dropped at the side. The table, when so folded, could not, of course, stand. At Philadelphia, in 1686, a folding table is valued at six shillings, and, in 1709, "a black walnut folding table" at £1 5s. The "ovall table" at Yorktown in 1667, "with bolts & catches," above referred to, may have been a folding table.

The frames of the largest of the oval and round tables were made narrow so that, when the leaves were dropped, the tables occupied a comparatively small space. There seems to have been an attempt made by this and other means to provide against the table when not in use taking up more floor-room than necessary. The feet of tables with the turned legs and stretchers of the thousand-legged variety were finished with the round or flattened ball, or with the Spanish foot shown in the chair in Figure 99.

Figure 192.
"Butterfly Table," about 1700.

A style of oval table of which there are many specimens in Connecticut, but which appear to be scarce elsewhere, is shown in Figure 192. The leaves are supported by the curious-shaped wings which swing either way. The shape of these supports has given it the name "butterfly table"—needless to say, a modern name. The feet on this specimen are worn away, reducing the original height of the table slightly. Tables of this kind are commonly of maple or cherry, but the writer knows of several oak ones, probably the earliest of this style.

It is, of course, impossible to say just how long the tables of the

styles thus far considered remained in fashion; for convenience' sake, it may be assumed, without danger of serious error, that they remained in favor until the middle of what we shall call the Queen Anne period — 1700–40. This means not that they were not in use many years after this date, but that they were after this time considered old-fashioned.

Figure 193.

X-Braced Table, last quarter seventeenth century.

When the tall chests of drawers, with the frame having six turned legs, came into use at the close of the seventeenth century, the form of the frame on which these chests were placed was reproduced in tables, or rather it would be more correct to say that the dressing-tables (see Figure 25) which accompanied the chests of drawers were copied in tables.

Figure 193 shows such a table in the Erving collection. It will be observed that the legs suggest more the turned ones shown in Figures 190 and 191, but the feet and stretchers are clearly on the

order of the dressing-tables. The wood is maple, and the table originally had a drawer, which is missing, and for that reason the back of the table was photographed. The drawer ran on the bottom and not on the sides. There is no trace of there ever having

Figure 194.

Slate-top Table, last quarter seventeenth century.

been an ornament where the stretchers cross. Such tables as these are extremely rare, the writer knowing of but one other, and that in the Bolles collection. There is also in the Bolles collection a table similar to this having three legs in front, but of course in this case the stretchers run between the legs, as in the six-legged chests of drawers. Tables with frames like the above-mentioned were, like the dressing-tables made with stone or slate tops. At Boston, in 1693,

MARQUETRY TOP OF SLATE TABLE SHOWN IN FIGURE 194
(*Figure 195.*)

are mentioned "in the lower room a slate table £1 10s"; in 1699, "in the hall a slate table £1 10s"; and in 1703, "a table with a stone in the middle £1."

A slate or stone table with turned frame, the legs of which are much like those in the preceding figure, having the stretchers of the older turning instead of the Italian X shape, is shown in Figure 194. The drawer has the single-arch moulding and the drop handle of the oldest chests of drawers.

Figure 195 shows the top of this table, now much worn and disfigured, but the fine inlaid border is still discernible, and must have been a very excellent piece of work, certainly not done in the colonies. The slate, except for a section in the centre, is missing. It belongs to the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester.

The question has often been raised as to whether the slate tops were intended for use, or were a mere freak of fashion. The reader will observe in Figure 194 the worn condition of the stretcher on the drawer side of the table, which certainly indicates that the feet of persons sitting at the table as though in a writing position had worn it.

It may be well to pause here at the end of the seventeenth century, which, as we have seen, marks the end of the oak period, to consider a number of kinds of tables mentioned in the inventories that we are unable to place among any of those already mentioned: at New York, in 1677, "4 Spanish tables 10s"; at Boston, in 1698, "a Jappan table," of what shape and style it is impossible to tell; at New York, in 1686, "2 speck tables"; in 1689, "a dansick table £1," meaning a table from that place, undoubtedly; at Philadelphia, in 1687, "1 inlaid table with a drawer and two stands damnified £1," which may have been a stone table with marquetry border; at New York, in 1702, "1 French table with balls thereunto belonging £3," probably referring to a billiard-table, for they had been invented as early as 1371 by a French artist, and may for that reason have been called French tables; also, in 1702, "a billyard table £3."

Figure 196 shows a table belonging to Mr. Meggat, following the general design of the cabriole-legged dressing-table, just as Figure 193 follows the design of the turned-legged dressing-table, likewise having a single drawer with a very narrow single-arch moulding about

Figure 196.

Dutch Table, 1720–30.

it on the frame. The handles are the etched brasses with screw-bolt fastenings of the Third Period. The legs have a finish seen on some of the early cabriole-legged chests of drawers.

A quaint little Dutch table, which is owned by Miss Esther Bidwell, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, and was bought about the year 1730, is shown in Figure 197. The wood is cherry, and the curves with which the frame is finished correspond to the bandy-legged dressing-table, belonging also to Miss Bidwell, shown in Figure 34. This table, together with one a little larger, and the tea-table shown in Figure 200, belong to the same set of furniture. The top extends about eight inches beyond the frame, and is scalloped to match. It would seem as though tables of this style, which accord so well with

the prevailing furniture of all kinds, must have been fairly common, but these two are the only ones of which the writer knows.

Figure 197.

Dutch Table, about 1730.

A common form of Dutch table with a round top, in the possession of the writer, is shown in Figure 198. The frame is narrow, and the semi-circular leaves, when dropped, make the table small enough to be easily disposed of. The feet on this piece are worn, so that the shape is somewhat impaired. Tables of this kind were made in large sizes and used as dining-tables after the "thousand-legged" table went out of fashion.

A familiar-shaped table of mahogany, with ball-and-claw feet of somewhat later date than the preceding, is shown in Figure 199. The ogee curves at the ends of the frame indicate that it is an early one of its kind.

Figure 198.

Dutch Table with Two Leaves, 1720–40.

Tea-tables begin to be mentioned about this time—one at New York in 1705 (the first mention we have found), one at Philadelphia in 1720, and one at Boston in 1732.

The Pennsylvania "Gazette" for July 7, 1737, advertises tea-table bolts, showing that the tea-tables with adjustable tops, arranged with bolts to hold the table-top in place, must have been well known at this time.

A small tea-table of cherry, belonging to Miss Bidwell, is shown in Figure 200. It dates about 1730, and is in its original state, except for a portion of the raised moulding, which is missing. The mouldings, which project above the table about an inch, were intended to prevent the china from being knocked off. This style of table has

Figure 199.

Mahogany Drop-leaf Table, 1750.

received the name of "Martha Washington tea-table" from the fact that she owned one, still to be seen at Mount Vernon.

Figure 201 shows another tea-table of the same general style but later date, belonging to Mr. Meggat. The edge will be seen to be cut from the solid wood and not applied as a moulding. The brass handles are somewhat unusual, but are quite in accord with the drapery effect much used in decoration during the Queen Anne period. It dates about 1750.

A candle-stand, or possibly a small tea-table, as the top is made to fall to one side, is shown in Figure 202. Stands of this kind were

Figure 200.

Tea-table, about 1730.

Figure 201.

Tea-table, 1740–50.

very plentiful throughout the colonies, and were evidently made for many years. Three stands are mentioned at Boston as early as 1676; "2 olive wood candle stands," at Philadelphia, in 1683. The china shown on this piece is from a Lowestoft tea-service purchased in 1799. This stand and china belong to Mrs. W. W. Andrews.

Figure 202.

Tripod Candle-stand, 1720–40.

Tripod candle-stands, about four feet high, and with very small tops, were made, apparently designed to hold a candle beside a high bedstead. Chippendale gives designs for such stands, and remarks that they should be made from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet 6 inches high.

The handsomest of the Dutch tea-tables were what are popularly known as "pie-crust tables." One which came from Pennsylvania, and belongs to Mr. Meggat, is shown, both open and closed, in Figures 203 and 204. The scalloped moulding is carved from the solid wood, and the pedestals and knees of these tables are often beautifully carved. The feet are almost invariably finished with the ball-and-claw. Not many of the pie-crust tables are found in New

Figure 203.

Figure 204.

Pie-crust Table, 1750–75.

England—the South, especially Virginia and Pennsylvania, furnishing the majority of the best work in carved mahogany.

Tea-tables with tripod stands, both with plain and ball-and-claw feet, are found in many sizes. The tops are usually round, but a square or octagonal top is occasionally seen. They are made to revolve on a pivot as well as to drop to one side.

Figure 205.

Tea-tray Table, 1750–75.

A little tea-table belonging to the writer, and dating about the middle of the eighteenth century, is shown in Figure 205. The top is practically a tray with handles, but is securely fastened to the frame. The whole table is so light, however, as to be readily moved as occasion requires. It is the only one of just this kind with which the writer has met in this country, and the style was probably not common.

An example of a fine mahogany table, belonging to Mrs. E. W. Jenkins, of New Haven, Connecticut, which probably was made in New England, is shown in Figure 206. It is finished with equal care on both front and back, and the carving is exceedingly well done. This table approaches quite nearly the Chippendale fashion, and, had the rail been carved, could, without question, be called Chippendale. It is at least American Chippendale.

Card-tables begin to appear in the inventories about 1730: "a walnut card table" is mentioned at Boston in 1732.

Two mahogany card-tables, which came from the South and belong to Mr. Meggat, are shown in Figures 207 and 208. They are constructed in the usual way, with the two top sections hinged at the centre so that one half rests on the other or leans against the

Figure 206.

Chippendale Table, 1760–80.

wall when not in use; when opened for use the leaf is supported by one of the legs, which swings out for that purpose. Figure 207 has a drawer, which is somewhat unusual. In general design it is like the table shown in Figure 206, although not so well executed. Figure 208 belongs to the block-front variety, but the plainness of the rails gives it a somewhat unfinished appearance. Card-tables similar to this are found which have both rear legs arranged extension fashion, which, pulling out from the frame, support the leaf.

Tables of walnut cherry, and mahogany, with more or less

carving, and cabriole legs with and without ball-and-claw feet, remained in fashion from about 1720 until 1780, when the Hepplewhite designs became very generally used. The tables just considered, covering the period between 1740 and 1780, correspond in date with the Chippendale period in England, and it may be correctly said

Figure 207.

Chippendale Card-table, 1760–80.

that they are in general Chippendale, as the wood is commonly mahogany, except in Pennsylvania and Virginia, where walnut continued to be extensively used for the finer pieces throughout this period, and the decoration, carving, and the outlines are those that he elaborated and perfected. Not many pieces of furniture which follow his designs, except in a very general way, are to be found in this country, though an occasional table with the rail carved in fret and the legs handsomely carved is found which may be called real Chippendale. From the time the large "thousand-legged" table went out of fashion until the extension-table was invented, in the year 1800, by Robert Gillow, tables of various kinds served the purpose

of dining-tables; the Dutch tables with round tops, such as Figure 198, were made large enough for that purpose, and were quite generally used. At Boston, in 1760, appears the following entry: "2 square mahogany tables £6"; and in 1770, "two mahogany ends for tables £6"; these were undoubtedly the tables made in twos and threes to be placed together and in that way obtain the desired size. They were made sometimes with each table in half-circle form, thus obtaining a circular table. Sometimes the half-tables are

Figure 208.

Chippendale Card-table, 1760–80.

oval, with a wide square leaf, so that when two of these are placed together they form a long table with round ends. Again, the tables will be in sets of three, the centre one oblong and the two end ones oval or square. Such tables as these were made with the plain straight leg, with or without inlay, and with the fluted leg in Sheraton style, and also in the pillar-and-claw style of the American Empire. They date probably from about 1760 to 1820.

After the adoption of the Hepplewhite and Sheraton styles, between the years 1780 and 1800, the cabriole leg was dropped and the straight square leg or the slender fluted leg took its place on furniture of every kind, and carving was superseded by inlay or marquetry. The wood continued to be principally mahogany.

Figure 209 shows an oval table in French walnut of characteristic Hepplewhite design. The top is inlaid about an inch from the edge with a narrow line of ebony outlined with white holly, the front and legs with the same woods, and the little wreath which decorates the legs will be seen to be the same as that shown in the Hepplewhite

Figure 209.

Hepplewhite Table, 1780–90.

sideboard in Figure 73. This table was found in Virginia, and belongs to the writer. A table which may be said to be Sheraton, though it suggests Adam very strongly in the classic decoration employed, is shown in Figure 210. The decoration on the legs consists of stripes a quarter of an inch in width at the top, tapering to an eighth at the bottom, of rosewood inlaid in satinwood. The top is satinwood bordered with rosewood, and the frame of the table and the drawer are made of oak, which indicates that this table was not made in this country. The brass rosette and ring handles and urn escutcheon are very characteristic of Sheraton.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century card-tables were very common, and large numbers of them survive in Hepple-

white and Sheraton style, and show very well the straight and fluted leg used by those designers.

Figure 211, a Hepplewhite table belonging to Mrs. W. W. Andrews, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, is of walnut inlaid with rose-

Figure 210.

Sheraton Table, 1780–90.

wood and white holly. The top is hinged at the centre, and when open is supported by a leg which swings toward the back. Tables of this design are frequently referred to as Chippendale. This is a misnomer, as the use of inlay and the square tapering leg at once proclaim.

A Sheraton card-table, belonging to Miss Manning, is shown in Figure 212. The wood is mahogany with inlay of varicolored woods. Its method of construction is the same as the preceding, and its date also probably the same, for there is no doubt that the Hepplewhite and Sheraton styles were largely used in this country with equal favor during the last ten years of the eighteenth century.

Delicate little sewing-tables are to be seen in both these fashions, the tops of which are sometimes arranged to lift, disclosing a cabinet with compartments designed to fit sewing utensils of all kinds. Another familiar arrangement has a drawer with the compartments, and just beneath a frame to which is attached a silk or velvet bag; the frame draws out like a drawer, and the bag is thus held open, making a very convenient repository for needlework of all kinds.

With Sheraton's late designs, about the year 1800, the fine outlines that distinguished the cabinet work of the eighteenth century passed out of style, and in their place came the rather uncouth and heavy designs known as Empire. As almost all the genuine old furniture now to be found for sale in this country follows this fashion, it will be well to consider it somewhat. After the French Revolution there was a reaction against everything that had formerly been in favor in art as well as in social realms, and there was an effort to bring in a completely new fashion in furniture. The design of Empire furniture is largely a revival of the classic, particularly of the Egyptian classic, brought about by the Napoleonic expeditions. The use of the sphinx head, with the bear's and lion's feet, the column mounted in brass or gilt, the classic tripod for the frames of tables, are all distinguishing features of this style. American Empire followed, to some extent, a fashion of its own, and adopted from the French what best suited the maker. The use of bronze was not extensive here, but brass was used to some extent for the feet of the tables, chairs, etc., and for pillar mountings; the handles were very generally the lion's head with the ring. The lyre, one of Sheraton's favorite designs, was much liked for table supports, and for decorating the backs of chairs. It may be said with truth that no finer mahogany was ever used than that employed in the Empire sideboards and tables. The carving often is very good, but coarse, and the veneering the very best of its kind.

Figure 211.

Hepplewhite Card-table, 1780–90.

Figure 212.

Sheraton Card-table, about 1790.

The Empire card-table shown in Figure 213 was probably made by Duncan Phyfe, a prominent cabinet-maker of New York early in the nineteenth century. The table shows the use of the brass foot and lyre support. The top in tables of this kind turns

Figure 213.

Empire Card-table, about 1810.

around on the frame, and is supported by bringing the seam across the frame. This table belongs to Mr. Meggat.

A work-table having the brass trimmings and feet is shown in Figure 214. The pillar and base with which this table is made are of a design used in tables of all sorts.

About 1820–30 the strictly classical ornaments and the fashion of trimming with metal was largely superseded in this country by the extensive use of heavy carving.

Figure 215 was a card-table made in Salem, Massachusetts, by Nathaniel Appleton, about the year 1820, and now in the possession of his granddaughters, the Misses Brown. The rope-carving and the

Figure 214.

Empire Work-table, 1820–30.

acanthus-leaf capital are designs used to a large extent on the posts of Empire bedsteads.

The table shown in Figure 216, which belongs to Mrs. Alexander Forman, of Brooklyn, is known as a pillar-and-claw table. This is one of a pair designed to be fitted together to form a dining-table. Pillar-and-claw tables were sometimes made in pairs, having the tops folding like card-tables, and on being opened and fitted together formed a table long enough to seat twelve or fourteen people.

A form of table sometimes called a sofa-table, both sides of which are finished alike, which combines the use of the lyre in wood with the heavy carving which came later, is shown in Figure 217. The rope-carved edge was extensively used about 1840, the date of this table.

Figure 215.

Empire Card-table, 1810–20.

Figure 216.

Empire Pillar-and-claw Table, 1810–20.

The last of the hand-made tables were made with a heavy centre pillar, which was sometimes octagonal, but more often square finished with a square base, at each corner of which was a small ball-shaped foot or a clumsy scroll.

Figure 217.

Sofa-table, 1810–20.

VIII

DESKS AND SCRUTOIRS

DESKS, in one form or another, have been known from the eighth century. In his "Natural History" Bacon makes the following remark: "Some trees are best for planchers, as deal; some for tables, cupboards and desks, as walnut"; showing that at the beginning of the seventeenth century desks were apparently in common use in England.

The word desk in the early inventories in England and this country had a different meaning from that now given to it. It meant a box which held the writing materials, the lid of which was sometimes used as a smooth surface upon which to write. These early desks were inventoried at very low figures, anywhere from 1s. to £1. The highest prices we have found are: at Salem, in 1647, "His deske £1"; one at 30s. at New York, in 1691; a walnut desk at Philadelphia, in 1705, 30s.; and at the same place, in 1706, "a walnut tree deske inlaid £6." which is so far above the highest valuations elsewhere found that if it were not for the early date, and the fact that a distinction was made all through these years between desks and scrutoirs, we should believe it to have been a scrutoir and not a desk-box.

Most of the desk-boxes were undoubtedly perfectly plain deal, maple, oak, or walnut boxes, and it is safe to assume that they have been lost because not considered worthy of care. Consequently,

nearly all that are now to be found are carved more or less, and some so beautifully that it is difficult to reconcile the low inventory valuation with the pieces.

These boxes or desks were apparently used for two purposes: one as a place in which to keep books, more especially the Bible, and the other for valuable papers and writing materials.

In the early days when the Bible was a treasure possessed by but few, it was kept under lock and key in a box of this kind, often beautifully carved, to be taken out and read at a gathering of the neighbors. By some these boxes are called "Bible-boxes" to this day. Thus at Philadelphia, in 1726, we find "Escritore, small table, deske Holy Bible £5 10s," the desk very likely being on the table, and the Bible either in or on the desk. Again, in the same place, the same year, "a book desk 26s."

Some of these boxes were carved on the front, sides, and top; sometimes the top was flat and sometimes slanted. We are inclined to believe that the boxes with carved or steeply slanted tops were, as a rule, Bible-boxes, the slanting top being of a convenient slope to hold the book while it was being read, while the flat-top or slightly slanted ones, uncarved on top, were for desks.

The boxes vary in size from 17 to 30 inches in length, and the inside, especially in those intended for desks, often contained the small till or compartment so frequently found in the chests, which was doubtless intended to hold the writing materials, and sometimes they contained pigeonholes, and sometimes a shelf running the long way of the box. This style of box is sometimes spoken of in the inventories as a "paper-box," as recorded at New York, in 1691, "a small black walnutt paper box," and in 1702, "In the writing closett 1 old desk for papers."

The first mention in the inventories of anything to do with writing is at Plymouth in 1633, which is the earliest year for which inventories are given in this country: "A writing table of glass 4d." This word

here probably means tablet, and it was, we believe, a plate of glass, perhaps framed, which was laid on the lap or table to obtain a perfectly smooth surface, in much the same way as is sometimes done to-day; and in Philadelphia, in 1687, appears "A writing slab & frame 8d," clearly indicating such a piece.

Probably the first mention of a desk in this country is that at Plymouth, in 1644, "1 little desk 1s," which modest price would lead us to suppose it was but a pine box. Again, at Boston, in 1676, "2 cedar desks 1£"; and in New York, in 1689, "one desk 16s"; and in 1691, "one desk or box 30s."

Figure 218.
Bible-box, 1649.

Figure 218 is a good example of a Bible-box in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society. It is made of English oak throughout, and is, therefore, doubtless of English make. It bears the inscription "M. S. 1649" on its front panel. The carving is of a very early pattern, and the circles on the side and top suggest a design popular in Holland early in the century, while that on the front suggests an English design first appearing in James I's reign.

Figure 219 shows a slant-top writing-desk belonging to the Long Island Historical Society. It is made throughout of English oak, and, in addition to the band of carving which appears in the illustration, there is a faint tracery about the edge of the lid. It was brought from England by William Wells, who landed at New Haven, Connecticut, in 1639, and in 1640 removed to Southold, Long Island. An interesting feature to note about this desk is that the slant top was apparently used to write upon, as it shows decided wear. At the back of the desk, on the inside, are five pigeonholes and one

drawer, which is an unusual arrangement, and clearly indicates that the piece was a writing-box. It is considerably larger than usual, its dimensions being 28 inches in length, 22½ inches in width, 11

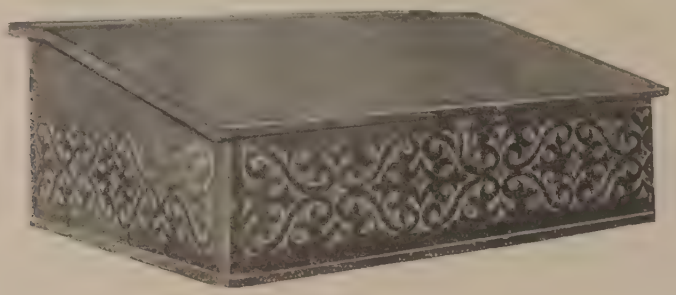


Figure 219.

Desk-box, first half seventeenth century.

inches high in the back, 6½ inches high in front. The pigeonholes are 7¾ inches long and 4½ inches deep.

Figure 220 shows a flat-top desk-box in the characteristic pattern of the Hadley chests (see Figure 12), including initials. It is made

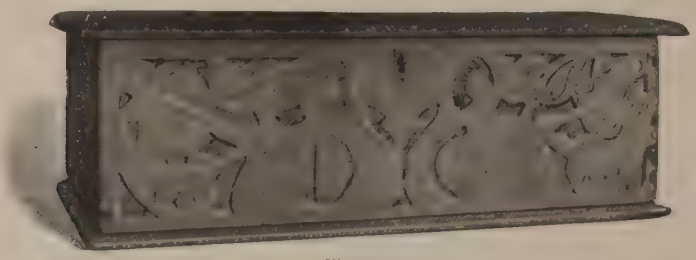


Figure 220.

Desk-box in "Hadley" Pattern, 1690–1710.

of American oak, and has only the front panel carved, as is usual in the American-made boxes. It dates, probably, about the same as the Hadley chests, 1690–1710. It is impossible from its present condition to determine whether it was stained, as were the Hadley chests, or not.

Figure 221 shows another desk-box, in an unusual conventional design, which we have not before seen. This, too, is made of American oak, and is carved only on the front. The initial N stands for Nott, the name of the family who formerly owned it. Both these two last-mentioned boxes are in the Erving collection. This desk is 23¾ inches long, 7½ inches high, and 16 inches deep.

Figure 221.

Desk-box, latter half seventeenth century.

Figure 222 illustrates an extremely rare piece of furniture which may be called a desk on a frame. This is in the Erving collection. The piece is still in the condition in which it was found; consequently only a general idea of such a piece can be obtained from the illustration. It stands 32½ inches high, and is 24 inches wide and 16 inches deep, and consists of a desk or box part opening from the top in the usual way, with a drawer below. An unusual feature of this piece is the shelf at the bottom. Only one applied ornament remains on the front, and one turtle-back on the side, but the piece originally had a double row of turned ornaments on the stiles, and a moulding finished the edge of the shelf part below. The only carving is that which appears on the drawer, which is the early half-circle pattern often found on the upper rails of chests. The piece dates about 1675.

Very few of these desks on frames have come to light. We know of two with carved panels and drawers, but without the lower shelf, and also two panelled ones, which stand much lower, on short,

turned legs, also without the shelf. It is believed by some that these boxes may have been used for linen, but we can see no reason for their being put to such use when the linen could have been better stored in the larger chests. Such a piece as this, we believe, is referred to in a Boston inventory of 1672, "1 desk and frame 10s,"

Figure 222.

Desk on Frame, about 1675.

and again in 1683, "1 standing desk, standish and box £1 5s." and the expression appears occasionally throughout the inventories at New York, Boston, and other places up to about 1690.

It seems beyond question that such pieces as Figure 222 were used as desks, for, throughout the inventories, whenever the words "and frame" are used they refer to a piece raised from the floor, as distinguished from those resting on feet or directly on the floor.

This, as is shown in the chapter on Chests of Drawers, was the way the change from low chests of drawers to those commonly called high-boys was first designated in the inventories, and as it was during this very time that this distinction was first noted with respect to chests of drawers, we conclude that the same distinction was intended wherever this expression is used. Furthermore, in none of the inventories does any expression appear but this which could possibly refer to such pieces, nor are any other pieces extant to which the expression desk and frame could apply.

From about the year 1660, or possibly a little earlier, a new style of furniture for writing purposes seems to have come into use called "scrutore," or "scriptoire," as some of the inventories call them. It may be assumed that the influence of Charles I and II, with their French ideas and fancies, had something to do with the change.

One is instantly impressed, on reading the early inventories, with the fact that up to the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century scrutoirs are inventoried at much higher figures than desks, it being very seldom that they are placed at a lower valuation than £1, while the average is easily from £6 to £7. A good illustration of the above appears in a Boston inventory of 1709: "a desk 3s," "1 scriptore £6." Among the various inventories we find the following: at Boston, 1669, "scritoire and desk £10"; in 1683, "a scriptore £2," "a small scriptore 10s"; in 1704, "a black walnut scrutoire"; in 1717, "a scriptore £8"; and in 1723 one for £12; at Salem, in 1684, "a large scriptoire £5"; at New York, in 1691, "a scrutore without a lock 20s"; and in 1704, "2 schrutoors £13," the last a spelling which none but a Dutchman could have executed; at Philadelphia, in 1687, "1 screwtor £1"; in 1705, "a scrutor & large Bible £2 5s"; and in 1720, "1 black pine screwtor £4."

What these earliest scrutoirs were it is difficult to determine. It is generally believed that they were of the ball-foot, slant-top type; but, although this was undoubtedly the style during the last years of

the seventeenth century, we hardly think it was the first style which is spoken of in the earlier inventories. An earlier form of which we know is built much on the order of the six-legged chest of drawers, with a little drawer under the moulding at the top, the front of the upper part opening downward much like the Empire desks, making a place upon which to write, and disclosing a cabinet with drawers and pigeonholes. The lower part is a chest of drawers, and the brasses are of the drop variety. The feet are of the ball-foot type. Several pieces on this order are to be seen in England, but we know of only one having been found in this country. From its general construction, and from the fact that it more nearly follows the line of the furniture at that time in vogue, we are led to place it as an early style of scrutoir. Such a piece may have been referred to in a Salem inventory of 1666, "a cabinet desk and two chairs £1 5s," for such pieces are called in England cabinets; and at the same place, in 1684, "one large scritore £5"; also in the inventory of a storekeeper in New York in 1692 appears "4 pr. scrutore chains with two dozen bolts"; these chains must have been used to hold the front which lets down to write upon, and as all the slant-top desks are supplied with two frames which pull out to hold the front, such chains were probably intended for pieces as above described.

There are two other styles in the slant-top scrutoirs of which we know that may have been earlier than the ball-foot variety. One has a slant top which lets down and rests on frames which pull out; this has one drawer below the scrutoir part, and the whole rests on turned legs with bracing. The other style has a small slant top which lifts like a desk-box, while the front, which is perpendicular, falls outward, being held in a position for writing by two pulls. It has one drawer below the scrutoir part, and the whole upper part just described rests on the lower part inside a heavy moulding, as in the six-legged chests of drawers. The legs are turned and six in number, and are fastened to this moulding, and there are three

Figure 223.

Ball-foot Scrutoir, about 1700.

narrow drawers, one between each pair of front legs. The bracings between these legs are turned. Both of the specimens above described are made of pine, and seem originally to have been painted red and black. Neither piece, however, has the characteristic mouldings about the drawers. They are both in the Bolles collection.

Either of these pieces would have been properly described in a Salem inventory in 1684, "one scritoire and frame £1 10s," although the valuation would have been high. Both of these scrutoirs are perfectly plain, and, except for the legs, have none of the ear-marks of seventeenth-century pieces, and may have been made by some joiner to special order at a much later date; but we are convinced, from a study of seventeenth-century pieces and the various inventories of that period, that pieces like these two just described could, and very probably did, exist, because the fashion of the legs in each of these pieces was used on all other kinds of furniture which required legs at the time when they were in style, and we see no reason why a scrutoir should have been an exception, especially as, in the next period, when the bandy leg was in style, scrutoirs are found following that fashion. We therefore describe these pieces here, although unable fully to determine whether they are seventeenth-century pieces or not. However, for all practical purposes, the scrutoir represented by Figure 223 is as early a type as a collector is likely to find in this country.

It will be noticed that the two small drawers are the top ones, and the space between them and the bottom of the scrutoir proper is taken up by a well which is reached through the slide which can be seen beneath the three little centre drawers on the inside.

The characteristics of such scrutoirs as this are this well, the two small drawers, the drop brasses, the turned ball feet, and the moulding about the bottom. The well, however, is not confined to such pieces, for it is occasionally found in scrutoirs of about a century later. These scrutoirs are found made of maple, walnut, and

whitewood, and sometimes with handsome veneered panels of bird's-eye maple or walnut on the face of the slant top and drawers. The single-arch moulding about the drawers would indicate that it is one of the earlier pieces. It dates probably between 1690 and 1710.

Figure 224.

Cabriole-legged Scrutoir, 1720–40.

(Handles and hinges new.)

Such pieces are also found with the double moulding about the drawers.

A style of scrutoir following directly after this omits the well and slide, bringing the two short drawers directly beneath the scrutoir proper, and adding an extra long drawer at the bottom. The drawers are surrounded with the canal-moulding shown in Figure 29, or are made overlapping. The feet are the simple bracket ones used next after the ball foot, and the handles are the engraved ones fastened with screw-bolts, or an early form of willow brasses.

The next style of desk, and perhaps contemporaneous with the one last described, adopted the Dutch bandy leg so popular throughout

the first half of the eighteenth century. It was in effect a low-boy, with a slant-top scrutoir set into the frame in much the same way as was the top part of the so-called high-boy.

The earliest variety was plain and of simple lines, the inside being arranged with a few pigeonholes and drawers, and was most often made of maple and cherry. They are not so scarce as the ball-foot desks, but they are nevertheless considered a very good find by collectors.

One of the plainest varieties is shown in Figure 224. It has but a single drawer, and the hip pieces, which should form a continuous curve from the leg to the lower edge of the scrutoir, are missing, marring the otherwise somewhat graceful effect, and the lower lines, being perfectly straight, make the piece seem even more severe. The scrutoir does not seem to have any slides to support the flap lid when let down, but has a slide, such as is used in other pieces for a candle-stand, directly in the centre above the drawer, which may have been intended to hold the top on a downward slant, as we can see no reason for a candle-slide in such a place. The inside is perfectly plain, in keeping with the exterior, and the brass hinges are, of course, new, having been placed on the outside when those on the inside were broken. The brasses are not original.

As Figure 224 shows this style of scrutoir in its simplest form, so Figure 225 illustrates one of the finest and most graceful pieces that has come under our observation. It has three drawers in the low-boy part, with the rising sun carved in the centre drawer, and the lower line is practically the same as appeared in the cupboard high-boy shown in Figure 33, but because of the elaborate interior we would date it somewhat later—between 1740 and 1750. The legs are in good proportion, with well-defined shoes at the bottom, and there is a little column finishing each corner. In the lower part of the scrutoir proper are two small square drawers for pens, etc., which on drawing out hold the slant top for writing purposes. The interior

contains eighteen drawers set into a frame made of a series of graceful curves, while the upper centre drawer has the carving to correspond with the lower part.

This piece is in almost faultless proportions, and has a grace and charm which it would be difficult to improve. It belongs to Mr. Walter Hosmer.

Figure 225.
Cabriole-legged Scrutoir, 1740–50.

Mr. Henry W. Erving, of Hartford, has a very beautiful example of one of these scrutoirs with a bookcase top, having a broken-arch cornice carved in Chippendale fashion.

A little later style than the preceding, and one which represents a type seen also in chests of drawers, is illustrated in Figure 226, belonging to Mr. Meggat.

This scrutoir, like the preceding one, is set into a frame, but in this case the frame is very low, containing no drawers, and, except for this frame, to which the legs are fastened, it is like the ordinary

variety of slant-top desks. It is of unusual size, being but 37½ inches high, 27½ inches wide, and 16 inches deep, and its diminutive proportions make it extremely graceful and attractive. The use of this low frame with bandy legs seems to have been confined to Connecticut.

After the first twenty years of the eighteenth century the marked distinction before noted in the prices given for desks and

Figure 226.

Slant-top Scrutoir, 1740–50.

scrutoirs disappears, and thereafter the inventories almost indiscriminately use the terms to denote the same kind of pieces at the same prices. Thus at Salem, in 1734, we find "one desk £5 10s," the high valuation showing that the old distinction was no longer made, and later still the word scrutoir seems to disappear entirely, and writing-pieces of every sort are called desks.

It was also about this time that the word bureau first came into use. The word is of French origin. Some assert that it comes from a word denoting a writing-piece of any kind, while others claim that the name was derived from the word *burrel*, or *bureau*, a coarse russet cloth of medieval times with which such pieces were covered. This latter derivation is probably the correct one, the first being a secondary meaning, for in Cotgrave's French and English dictionary, published in 1611, the following appears: "Bureau, a thick and course cloth of a browne russett or dark mingles colour; also the table thats within a Court of audit or of audience (belike, because tis usually covered with a carpet of that cloth)."

The word is used by Swift in its modern spelling with its early meaning in the following much-quoted stanza:

"For not a desk with silver nails
Nor bureau of expense
Nor standish well Japann'd avails
To writing of good sense."

This word is compounded in two ways in the inventories, bureau-desk and bureau-table or -chamber-table. Dr. Lyon, in his splendid work on Colonial Furniture, thinks the former referred to a scrutoir, while the latter referred to a low chest of drawers, or bureau in the modern sense, and cites such entries as: at Boston, in 1721, "a burow desk £3 10s"; in 1725, "1 buroe £5"; in 1739, "1 buro table"; and in 1749, "In the front chamber 1 buro table with drawers £15" —all of these valuations, of course, being in inflated currency.

This distinction hardly seems to us probable, because a low chest of drawers could have been properly described by calling it by that name, as had been the custom in the inventories of the oak period, and as was still occasionally done in this; and, furthermore, the word table could hardly be applied to such a piece.

It is undoubtedly true that when the expression first appeared

it referred to some new style in furniture, and we believe, from a study of old dictionaries, as well as the inventories and the pieces still extant belonging to those times, that the word was always used in connection with writing in some way.

The word bureau appears to have had two meanings, either a piece on which to write, or a chest of drawers of some sort. In the expression "bureau-desk" the word seems to have been used in its second meaning, otherwise it would not be a qualifying word and would be redundant. The furniture best answering this description would be the slant-top desks with the chest of drawers below, which was a new style. The other expression, "bureau-table" or "bureau-chamber-table," would seem to use the word in its first sense. The expressions "table" and "chamber-table," as used in the inventories we have seen, refer to what are commonly called low-boys; so if the word bureau was there used to denote a piece to write upon, we would have a low-boy plus a desk, such pieces as are shown in Figures 224 and 225; and as such pieces came into existence at about the time this expression first appears in the inventories, we believe them to have been there described.

The word bureau does not seem to have been used to any extent in its modern meaning until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and we believe it was then so called because of the desk appearing in the upper drawer of such pieces; the desk-drawer later was dropped, but the name remained.

Chippendale shows designs for ladies' secretaries, which he calls bureaus; and he, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton call chests of drawers commodes, so it is hardly likely that the word bureau could at that time have been very commonly used to denote a simple chest of drawers. The word secretaire is the same word as secretary, a corruption of escritoir.

It will therefore be seen that after about the first twenty years of the eighteenth century there were four words used interchangeably to

denote a piece of furniture for writing purposes, viz.: desk, scrutoir, escritoir, and bureau.

Scrutoirs, with bookcase or cabinet tops, became popular early in the eighteenth century. They were usually with panelled wood doors, although occasionally throughout the inventories they are mentioned with glass doors, and sometimes with looking-glass doors. The tops of the earliest pieces were square; later, as the broken arch came into fashion, that style was almost exclusively used.

Figure 227 illustrates the oldest scrutoir with a top which we have found. It will be seen that the lower part has all the characteristics of the ball-foot low scrutoir shown in Figure 223: the well above the two short drawers, the slide inside, and the moulding about the drawers, which in this piece is of the double variety. The turned feet are different from those usually found, but we are unable to discover that they are new. At any rate, the overhanging moulding at the bottom shows that it must have had ball feet of some kind.

It originally had brass drop handles, and an unusual feature is the moulding extending around the front and sides as in the low-boy scrutoirs, the effect of which is to separate the chest of drawers from the scrutoir.

It was with great difficulty that we could be persuaded that the top was not a later addition; but after a careful examination we are convinced that it is genuine, because it is perfectly consistent. The scrutoir is finished throughout in walnut. The large drawers have walnut fronts, with sides, backs, and bottoms of English oak, and the small drawers are entirely of English oak, as are the pigeonhole compartments. The moulding about the centre pigeonholes is of the double variety, as in the lower part, and the upper part sets into a wide moulding, which shows no sign of ever having been tampered with. The cornice is characteristic also of the early high-top pieces; candle-slides may be seen just beneath the doors.

This scrutoir is at the Philadelphia Library, and is said to have

Figure 227.

Cabinet-top Ball-foot Scrutoir, about 1700.

belonged to William Penn, and it is of a style which lends color to the tradition, for it could date as early as 1700. It is undoubtedly of English manufacture, which may help to settle a much-disputed point as to whether scrutoirs of the ball-foot style were known in England.

Figure 228.

Cabinet-top Scrutoir, 1740–50.

This illustration shows the piece in its original condition before it had been incorrectly restored by adding a broken arch at the top and modern copies of the etched brasses of the Second Period. It is altogether an extremely interesting piece, and if our conclusion be true

as to its genuineness, it places the high-top scrutoirs earlier than it has been customary to place them.

Figure 228 shows a scrutoir with wooden doors, which is at the Essex House, Salem, and is said to have been made in 1744. The eagle at the centre of the top we would assign to a later date. It will be noted that just above the scrutoir part are two slides for holding

Figure 229.

Slant-top Scrutoir, about 1750.

candlesticks, and the upper part of the piece is divided into pigeonholes, with three narrow drawers at the bottom. The feet are of the Dutch bandy-legged type, but are fastened to the scrutoir, and not to the frame, as in Figure 226. The handles are not original, the piece doubtless originally having had willow brasses. The mouldings about the drawers are unusual, much like those which were on the oak-panelled pieces.

It is probable that the doors of the bookcase tops were those

finished with glass, while the solid wood doors were intended to hide pigeonholes. We find at Boston, in 1756, "a mahogany desk and book case £26 13s"; and in an advertisement of an auction in the Boston "Evening Post," in July, 1751, "a very handsome mahogany desk and bookcase with looking glass doors."

Figure 229 is an example of the style of desk common in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, having the ogee bracket

Figure 230.

Slant-top Scrutoir, 1760–80.

feet, with a fan-carving on the middle of the lower front and on three of the little drawers inside.

In nearly all of the scrutoirs the maker exercised great ingenuity in contriving all sorts of secret drawers and receptacles in which deeds, wills, and other valuable papers could be safely kept. These secret places were sometimes arranged back of the centre compartment. The whole centre would draw out on being released by pressure on a hidden spring, which was sometimes concealed above a little drawer at the top, which must first be removed; sometimes the spring would be concealed at the bottom or on a side, always ingeni-

ously hidden from the uninitiated. This centre being drawn out disclosed either a series of small shallow drawers, a shelf, or two narrow upright drawers on either side of the centre. This is the commonest

Figure 231.

Slant-top Scrutoir, 1760–80.

place to find secret compartments, but if they are not there, a narrow shelf may be found between the long top drawer and the bottom of the scrutoir part to which an entrance can be obtained by means of a sliding panel in the bottom of the scrutoir part, sometimes securely fastened by a spring hidden in various ways. Again, there is occasionally a hollow place at the back of the slides which holds the lid. The writer knows of a scrutoir with a secret place thus arranged, in which a will was found by accident, securely hidden.

Figure 230 illustrates a scrutoir with an unusually beautiful interior built on a series of curves, and decorated in designs apparently burned into the wood. It was found in central Pennsylvania. On opening the door in the centre a set of drawers appears, and

Figure 232.

Block-front Cabinet-top Scrutoir, 1760–80.

under the bottom of these drawers is a spring which, on being pressed, releases the whole centre and discloses a secret compartment back of the two carved columns.

A type of scrutoir of which there are many examples, differing slightly in size and shape of drawers, interior arrangement, style of foot and handles, is shown in Figure 231. Mahogany, maple, and cherry are the common woods, all three sometimes being used in one piece. They date anywhere from 1750 to 1780.

Figure 232 is a block-front high-top scrutoir, made of mahogany throughout, having the ogee bracket feet. The arrangement

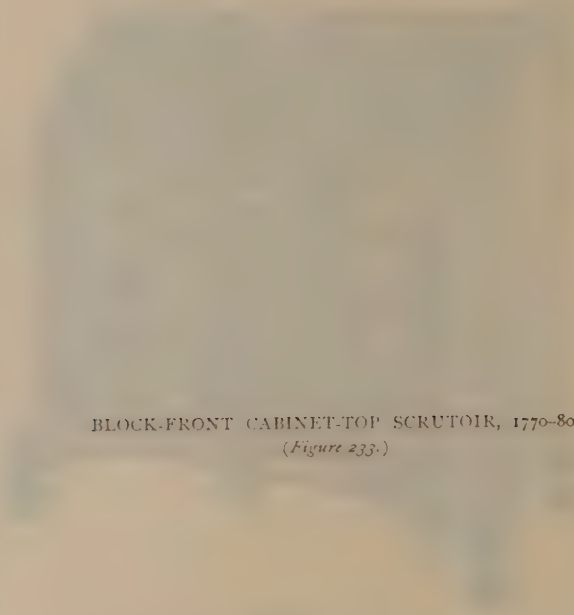
of the interior is worth noting as being particularly handsome. The brass handles are missing, but they were undoubtedly on the order of the willow brasses appearing in the next illustration. The casters

Figure 235.

Block-front Slant-top Scrutoir, 1770–80.

we should at once pronounce to be recent additions, although a set of casters is mentioned in a New York inventory in 1710.

A cabinet-top block-front scrutoir, which represents the finest work of the period to which it belongs, appears, both open and closed, in Figures 233 and 234. It will be observed that the blocking extends not only on the lower part, but also on the slant lid and top section, and is finished in a carved shell, the centre ones depressed and the outer ones raised; the feet are well-proportioned ogee feet, also showing the blocking. The doors of the cabinet part open in three sections, as will be seen from Figure 234, and the pigeonholes



BLOCK-FRONT CABINET-TOP SCRUTOIR, 1770–80.
(*Figure 233.*)

Figure 234.

Block-front Cabinet-top Scrutoir, 1770–80.

now showing were originally fitted with narrow shelves for filing papers. The broken-arch cornice and the pillar finish along the edges of the upper portion show the scrutoir to date in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Figure 236.

Serpentine-front Slant-top Scrutoir, 1760–80.

A peculiarity not often seen on block-front pieces is that the drawers are overlapping instead of being finished with the narrow moulding about the drawers, as is usual. (See Figure 235.) The top part is made to lift from the scrutoir part, and brass handles are fastened on each end to facilitate moving. The piece is, of course, made of mahogany.

This scrutoir, with three others, was made, presumably by a cabinet-maker at Newport, for four brothers, John, Joseph, Nicholas, and Moses Brown, and is now owned by the banking firm of Brown & Ives, of Providence, who are successors in business to the original owners.

Figure 235 illustrates a very good example of a low block-front scrutoir, belonging to Mr. Albert H. Pitkin, of Hartford. The brasses are the original, and the four ball-and-claw feet are in good proportion. Such pieces as these last described represent the most

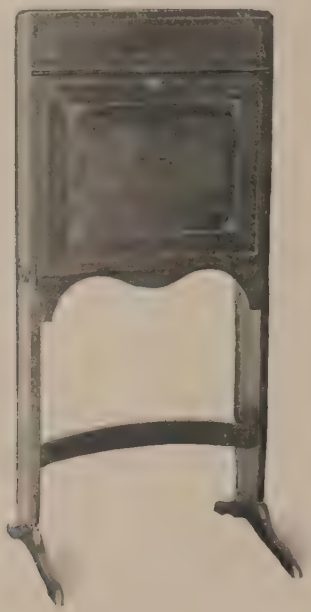


Figure 237.

Fire-screen Scrutoir, 1780–90.

expensive style of scrutoir that was made, the block-front being cut from a solid piece of wood necessarily of great thickness. The mouldings on these pieces are usually carved out of the frame and not on the drawers. They date in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Figure 236 shows a serpentine-front scrutoir with ball-and-claw feet, belonging to Mr. Meggat. The curve is cut from a solid block of wood, as it is in the block-front pieces.

Another style of scrutoir found occasionally in this country, but

more often in England, is a fire-screen scrutoir, an example of which appears in Figure 237, which is at the Van Cortlandt Manor, at Croton, New York. The front drops, disclosing a set of shallow pigeonholes. Such pieces were made by Shearer and Hepplewhite in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and this piece is almost identical with one of the illustrations among Shearer's designs, and is undoubtedly of English make.

Figure 238.
Sheraton Writing-table, about 1789.

We now come to a very different type of desk from those hitherto described. Figure 238 is a desk used by General Washington when President of the United States in 1789, and is now in the Governor's Room in the City Hall, New York. The wood is mahogany, and the fluted legs and rosette trimmings are of the Sheraton style. The brass handles are found on both sides and ends, and there are seven drawers on each side, while the brasses at either end, and the moulding about imaginary drawers, convey the impression that the ends are also furnished with drawers. At each end of the top are shelves for papers.

Figure 239 is a Sheraton scrutoir beautifully inlaid in satin-wood, ebony, and box. The writing-board is hinged at the centre and folds back upon itself. The upper portion contains pigeonholes and drawers concealed by sliding panels. The brasses are new, but are

Figure 239.
Sheraton Scrutoir, 1810.

of the proper design. This piece was purchased in 1810, and is now owned by Mrs. G. L. Bulkley, of Hartford. There are many pieces of this general style to be found in this country, all of which are well made, and most of which are extremely graceful.

Figure 240 is a scrutoir with bookcase top, dating late in the

Figure 240.

Scrutoir with Bookcase Top, about 1800.

eighteenth century. The face of the wide upper drawer falls outward by means of a spring and quadrant, disclosing pigeonholes and drawers.

There is in the Pendleton collection at Providence a very beautiful low-boy of late design which contains a drawer arranged

Figure 241.
Empire Desk, about 1820.

in this way, and throughout the period from 1800 to 1840 this desk-drawer is commonly met with both in scrutoirs and chests of drawers.

A curious combination of styles appears in the scrutoir shown in Figure 241. The broken-arch cornice and the narrow moulding on the drawers are oddly associated with Empire-carved columns and glass rosette handles, which place its date not earlier than 1820.

There are no pigeonholes, and the writing-board is arranged to fold back on itself.

Figure 242 is an example of a very handsome scrutoir in Empire style, owned by Mr. Casper Sommerlad, of Brooklyn. Al-

Figure 242.

Marquetry Empire Scrutoir.

though the piece is in very bad condition, yet it may be seen from the illustration that the marquetry is of a high order, and is not only on the front but the sides, and also on the inside of the desk part. There is a raised brass beading about the drawers, and a quarter-inch from the edge of the drawers is an inlaid strip of brass. The heads

and feet at the two front corners are of ormolu. The handles are missing. The body of the scrutoir is of oak. Pieces of this general style, usually of plain, well-grained mahogany, sometimes with pillars at the corners, are fairly often found in this country, and date about 1800–20.

IX

MIRRORS

THE date of mirrors has proved very puzzling to determine, for they seem to have followed a fashion of their own, and this so independently that though the furniture of a given period may have an unmistakable style, the mirrors of the same period do not follow it to a degree that makes them easily identified with it. The records from the first have frequent mention of looking-glasses and mirrors, but, except for an occasional very brief hint, do not materially assist in placing them.

Families owning mirrors which have been in their possession perhaps for generations have been found to know nothing of their date or history, for family documents do not often mention them, and even tradition seems not to have attached itself to them as to furniture of other kinds.

The mirrors in use previous to 1500 were of highly polished metals, and not until the early years of the sixteenth century was glass used for this purpose. At this time Venetian workmen received state protection for the manufacture of glass mirrors, and for more than a century Venice supplied practically the whole world. In England, the first glass plates for mirrors were made in the year 1673, at Lambeth, and from this time were in general use. The records throughout the colonies for the first few years mention looking-glasses valued at from two to five shillings. As these must

have been Venetian ones previous to 1673, and consequently expensive, the inference is that at that low estimate of value they must have been mere hand-glasses. After 1680, however, the records show them to have been of considerable value, very much above most of the furniture. Other records are: at Salem, in 1684, "a large looking glass and brasses" is valued at £2, 5s.; at New York, in 1689, "a large looking glass 36s," and in 1696, one at £5; at Boston, in 1698, "a large looking glass," £2, 15s.; at Philadelphia, in 1686, "a square looking glass with diamonds," and in 1687, "an olive wood diamond cut looking glass"; at New York, in 1696, "a looking glass with a gilded frame and one with an ebony frame," and in 1697, "one large looking glass with a walnut tree frame."

The descriptions above enumerated cover practically all the hints that the records give of the character of the mirrors previous to 1700. As this was the period when the carved oak furniture was in fashion, mirrors with oak frames, ornamented in the prevailing fashion, would naturally be looked for. That they were thus made in England is undoubtedly true, for specimens of them with frames carved and inlaid with square blocks in light and dark woods, as were the cupboards and other furniture of the time, are not very rare. The olive-wood and ebony mirror-frames were very common here, and must, as a rule, have been small and plain, for they were seldom valued above seven shillings.

English looking-glasses of the seventeenth century were, some of them, made with frames entirely of glass; several of these may still be seen at Hampton Court Palace. The "square looking glass with diamonds" referred to at Philadelphia may have been an all-glass mirror.

An olive-wood mirror preserved at Whipple House, Ipswich, Massachusetts, which probably dates before 1700 and is one of a very few which have survived, is shown in Figure 243. The frame is

inlaid in scroll design with light and dark woods, and the glass is the original hand-bevelled one.

At Boston, in 1703, a looking-glass and frame with flowers and a pair of sconces are mentioned, and the Boston "News Letter" for

Figure 243.

Inlaid Olive-wood Mirror, seventeenth century.

August 10, 1719, advertises "looking glasses of divers sorts and sizes, lately imported from London, to be sold at the glass shop, Queen Street." At Philadelphia, in 1720, a black-framed looking-glass is valued at £1 5s., and a large looking-glass at Salem, in 1734, is placed at £6 — the latter in the paper currency of that time, which was worth in silver about one third its face value.

Figure 244 shows a mirror dating between 1720 and 1740. The general outline of the frame of this mirror is almost identical with designs for mantelpieces published by two English architects, William Jones and James Gibbs — Gibbs in 1728, and Jones in 1739. The broken-arch cornice, we have seen, was very popular by 1730, and was extensively used on mirrors of the Queen Anne period. The

urn which finishes the pediment in this mirror is of great assistance in placing the date, for it is one of the styles of urns used between 1700 and 1740, and quite different from that used by Chippendale and his contemporaries. The cover to this urn is missing.

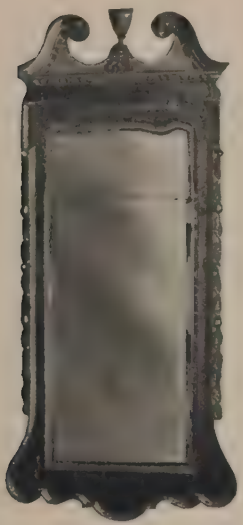


Figure 244.
Walnut and Gilt Mirror, 1720–40.

This distinction between the urns of different periods is important, not only in determining the date of mirrors, but also the date of any piece of furniture on which the urn is used. Figure 245 shows a drawing of two urns. The first is taken from the face of the clock shown in Figure 274, which was made by Loundes, and dates prior to 1720. This and the urn shown on the mirror in Figure 244 are typical of the Queen Anne period. The second urn shown in Figure 245 is Chippendale. This egg-shaped urn is the only one used by Chippendale, and as it is of unusual design is easily recognizable. The urns on Figures 250 and 252 are those popular in the time of Shearer and Hepplewhite, 1775–90, and differ quite materially from the Queen Anne urns. There is no drapery, and the urns are usually either laterally or longitudinally elongated.

Figure 245.
Queen Anne and Chippendale Urns.

Figure 246 shows another mirror of similar style and date, but, very unfortunately, the centre ornament is missing. The frame is walnut, and the gilded leaves and flowers which ornament the sides are carved from the wood, another indication of an early date, for later mirrors in much the same style were made which have the

wreath made of wire and plaster. Both of the above mirrors have the old hand-bevelled glass which was used for all mirrors at the time these were made.

Figure 244 belongs to Mrs. John R. Matthews, of Croton, and Figure 246 is at the Van Cortlandt manor-house, Croton-on-Hudson.

Figure 246.
Walnut and Gilt Mirror, 1720–40.
(Centre ornament missing.)

Figure 247.
Wood and Gilt Mirror, about 1730.
(Some parts missing.)

Figure 247 shows a mirror which belongs to Miss Esther Bidwell, some parts of which are missing, the pierced woodwork which should finish the top at the sides having been lost. This mirror was purchased about 1730, and has always hung in the same house. The glass is bevelled, and the leaf ornament and a narrow carved border just inside the moulding are gilded. Mirrors similar

to this, having a square glass and an eagle at the top, will be spoken of later.

A mirror similar to the three already described, and also dating before 1750, is shown in Figure 248. This is beautifully carved and gilded all over. The glass is new, and the shape of the moulding into which it is set, as in the mirrors just mentioned, is characteristic of the Queen Anne mirrors, as is also the glass in two parts, joined by simply lapping the sections without the moulding, which was used later. Some English mirrors were made with a narrow band of metal or glass to finish this seam.

Figure 248.
Carved and Gilt Mirror, 1730–50.
(Glass new.)

The chief characteristics therefore to be noted in mirrors dating between 1700 and 1750 are the mirror in two sections joined by simply lapping the glass, the waiving outline of the mirror in the upper section, the ornaments of wood instead of plaster and wire, and the style of urn. All of these characteristics do not of course appear in every specimen, but so far as we have been able to observe, the waiving outline of the mirror in the upper section is always present. Figure 244 combines all of these characteristics.

The middle of the century brings us to a time when the designing of mirror-frames was given a prominent place by English architects. H. Copeland published a series of plates for them in 1746. Lock's "New Book of pier and frames, ovals, girandoles and tables" was published in 1752, and Chippendale's "Director" contains designs for mirror-frames. All of these designs are, in general, French rococo (a word made up of two French words, *rocaille* and *coquille*,

rock and shell) in style. The frames were in shape wide and narrow ovals, square and oblong, and carved in lacelike and airy designs not calculated to make them very lasting.

Figure 249.
Carved and Gilt Mirror, 1750–60.

Figure 250.
Filigree Gilt Mirror, 1770–80.

A very fine mirror in decided classical design, which belongs to Miss E. A. Brown, of Salem, is shown in Figure 249. It is carved, and without wire or plaster. Its date is about 1750–60.

A mirror in the possession of Mr. Albert H. Pitkin is shown in

Figure 250, which is a good example of the handsome mirror fashionable from 1770 to 1780, and even later. The wreath at the sides will be

Figure 251.

Mahogany Inlaid and Gilt Filigree Mirror, 1770–80.

seen to be practically the same as that used in the following illustration, and, like that, is reinforced with wire.

A mirror belonging to Mr. Meggat is shown in Figure 251, which at first sight would be at once pronounced Queen Anne, and dated before 1750; but, in spite of the general effect, there are points about it which must make it later. The glass is square, the wreath at the sides and the flowers at the top are reinforced with wire, and there is a narrow band of inlay in white holly about the opening, and an urn inlaid in colored woods at the top — features which make it pretty certain that it dates in the neighborhood of 1775.

Figure 252.
Hepplewhite Mirror, 1780–90.

From 1780 to the end of the century Hepplewhite mirrors, with his favorite shield- and oval-shaped openings, were very popular. They seem to have been made mostly in small sizes, and being very fragile, are seldom to be found with all their original ornaments.

Figure 252 illustrates one of these mirrors, which might have been made by Hepplewhite himself, but which shows that other makers used his designs, for it has the following neatly printed and pasted on the back: "Looking glasses and all sorts of frames with carving and gilding by George Cooper real manufacturer 82 Lombard Street London." The narrowest parts of this frame are reinforced with wire, as it would be impossible to carve wood in so slender a design. This mirror belongs to Mrs. E. B. Watkinson, of Hartford. Mirrors of this kind were usually in pairs, and the mate to this one is still preserved. The Boston "Gazette" in 1780 advertises "Pairs of looking glasses"; and the New York "Gazette and Mercury" in the same

Figure 253.

Carved and Gilt Girandole, about 1780.

year contains the following advertisement of Duncan Barclay & Co., 516 Hanover Square: "Large pier and looking glasses oval sconces and girandoles."

A girandole belonging to a very fine pair owned by Mrs. Charles Clarence Torr, of Philadelphia, is shown in Figure 253. The bold carving suggests Chippendale, but the row of balls around the frame places it after his time and as late as 1780. A great many very fine girandoles were owned both in the North and South, particularly after the Revolution; one variety, which is frequently seen, has the round frame, surmounted by an eagle with wide-spread wings.

A mirror of quite different style from any of the preceding is shown in Figure 254. This was imported for the Nichols house at Salem when it was built in 1783. The architect for this house was the famous MacIntire, and some of the beautiful woodwork of the mantelpiece is shown in the illustration. The earliest mirrors with straight tops, and bordered or divided with pillars, have the pillars narrow and fluted, decorated with wreaths; the upper sections are not painted, but have carved designs applied on the glass, which appears to be enamelled, usually white. It is generally supposed that mirrors in the style of the above were not used until about the year 1800, but there is no doubt that this one was made for this place at the date above given.

Figure 255.
Gilt and Painted Mirror, about 1800.

A small mirror in this style, owned by the Hon. John R. Buck, of Hartford, is shown in Figure 255. The upper section of this is painted, which shows it to date somewhat later than the preceding mirror.

After the Revolution, and about the time the eagle was adopted as a national emblem, this device appeared in decoration of all kinds. Large numbers of mirrors similar to Figure 256, in all sizes, were

Figure 256.

Mahogany and Gilt Constitution Mirror, 1780–90.

Figure 257.

Constitution Mirror, 1810–15.

made and sold throughout the country, and bore the name of Constitution mirrors; most of them had the eagle in gold at the top, either in plaster or carved from the wood. The handsomest form of Constitution mirror is shown in Figure 256, which belongs to the Hon. John R. Buck, of Hartford. The glass rosettes shown with this mirror were popular about 1820–30, while the mirror dates about 1780–90.

Another form of Constitution mirror, which was made in all sizes, and continued to be made after 1800, is shown in Figure 257, which bears the advertisement of its maker, Bartholomew Plain, Chatham Street, New York, whose name first appears in the directory at that

MANTEL AND MIRROR, 1783.
(*Figure 254.*)

address in 1805, and who continued to work there as late as 1816. The small gold eagle which was originally at the centre of the top is missing, and is only suggested by the shape into which the wood is cut. The eagle, in mirrors of this kind, was made of plaster and applied.

It is a curious coincidence that the lines of the Queen Anne mirrors, shown at the beginning of this chapter, should have been so closely reproduced in the neighborhood of the year 1800, when furniture of other kinds did not at all follow the Queen Anne patterns; but the fact remains that the mirrors of 1730 and of 1800 were, except for characteristics previously pointed out, very similar, and are often mistaken for each other.

By far the largest number of mirrors bearing the title of antique are those in the Empire style, made between the years 1810 and 1840. The rope-carved pillars, the acanthus-leaf carving, and the lyre carved and applied, that we have seen to be characteristic of Empire furniture in general, are consistently reproduced in the mirrors of that time, making them very easily identified. They were made in many sizes, both in mahogany and gilt, and with and without the drop or acorn ornaments pendent from the cornice. The latest of these have the part above the dividing moulding painted in landscapes, scenes from the War of 1812 quite frequently, or other designs, and the frame also was sometimes of soft wood, painted. The rosettes which ornament the corners were sometimes wood and sometimes brass.

Figure 258 shows an Empire mirror of mahogany, with the lyre carved in a light wood and applied; the mirror throughout is well proportioned and the work good. The little mirror shown beside it is as old as the larger one, and was made, probably, for a toy. It is complete, even to the little drops, and measures only 10 inches in height by 5¾ inches in width. Furniture of almost every variety was made in miniature, the writer having seen genuine examples of chests, chairs, tables, high-boys, desks with bookcase tops, bureaus,

and sideboards, all made with every proper detail, probably for children's toys, for we find toy furniture advertised for sale in New York between 1760 and 1770.

Figure 259 shows a gilt mirror of a very common pattern, although the details in rosettes and the turning of the columns are

Figure 258.
Carved Mahogany Empire Mirrors, 1810–20.

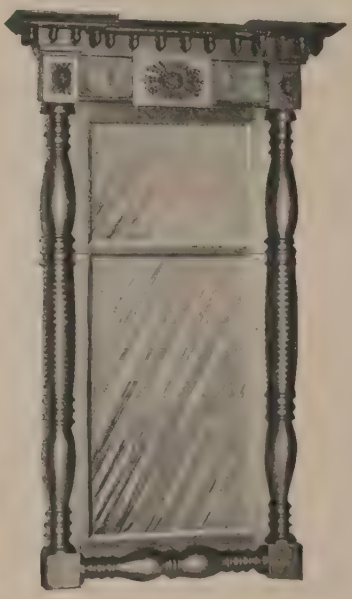


Figure 259.
Gilt Empire Mirror, 1810–20.

often varied. The rosettes belonging at the two lower corners are missing. The last three mirrors belong to the writer, and date about 1820.

A very handsome mantel mirror, belonging to Mr. Albert H. Pitkin, of Hartford, is shown in Figure 260. The turning of the columns is very much the same as that in the preceding figure, and its date is about the same.

It was the custom all through the eighteenth century to support

the mirrors on a pair of small rosettes, thus making the mirror tilt forward. These rosettes were of various kinds, usually of brass, and are frequently mentioned with the mirror in the inventories.

Figure 260.

Gilt Mantel Mirror, Empire Style, 1810–20.

Eight examples of these rosettes are shown in Figure 261. The first six are enamel bound in brass, and date about Revolutionary times. The seventh is of brass with an urn in openwork, and

Figure 261.

Enamel and Brass Mirror Rosettes.

the last is a brass bust of George III, which must date prior to the Revolution. In the Empire period many of these rosettes were made, both in this small size for mirrors and in a larger size for window-curtains.

X

BEDSTEADS

THERE is, perhaps, no branch of the subject of furniture more difficult to approach than that of bedsteads, and this not because they were by any means scarce, but because the bedsteads of the seventeenth century in this country have utterly disappeared, and the inventories give such meagre descriptions that almost the only clews are the valuations there given, and a study of the English bedstead of the same period.

There is, of course, a distinction between a bed and a bedstead, more marked a century ago than to-day — the bedstead being the frame or furniture part, while the bed referred to the mattress.

In England, before the Norman Conquest (1066), and even in the period immediately following, bedsteads were scarce, reserved for the master of the house or ladies, there often being but one to a house, while the other members of the household lay on mattresses of straw laid on the floor or on tables, chests, or benches.

The bedsteads were sometimes built into the walls like bunks, but more often had four massive posts, with top and sometimes sides of wood, and heavy curtains, making a sort of sleeping-chamber in itself, and, it is asserted, were sometimes placed out of doors. However this may be, in some of the old manuscripts and tapestries we find bedsteads represented with tiled roofs, which would indicate that they were exposed to the weather. At any rate, when we consider

that the castles and homes of that early day were without glass or other protection for the windows, we can readily understand why that particular style should have originated.

The style, having been brought into existence by necessity, developed along the same line toward a more graceful and delicate design, first losing the sides of wood but retaining the high headboard; then in the early Jacobean period the high headboard gave way to a lower one with curtains at the back, and with smaller posts; later the solid wood top was superseded by a frame designated merely to hold a canopy of various kinds of cloth.

The bedsteads in use in England at the time this country was settled were made of oak, often elaborately carved in designs such as are found on the oak furniture here. They were large and cumbersome, and therefore difficult of transportation, and, except to the South, where English life had been transported bodily, we doubt very much whether in the first fifty years very many found their way to this country. Some, however, must have found their way to New England, for Miss Helen E. Smith, in "Colonial Days and Ways," gives a portion of a letter sent to a correspondent in England, in 1647, by Mrs. Margaret Lake, a sister-in-law of Governor Winthrop, in which she asks to have sent her, among other things, "a bedsteede of carven oake (ye one in wch I sleept in my fathers house) with ye valances and curtayns and tapistry coverlid belongyngs."

Figure 262 shows the famous Countess of Devon's bedstead which is preserved at the South Kensington Museum. This illustration is given, not because we believe such beautiful bedsteads were in use in this country, but because it is a splendid example of the general type of carved oak bedsteads which must have been here, such as was mentioned by Mrs. Lake, and also because it combines to an unusual degree the patterns of carving found on many of the chests and other carved oak pieces in this country, thus tending to prove the statement heretofore made that practically all the early carving

on oak furniture in this country was taken from English models. Many of the designs shown on this bedstead are to be seen on the chests shown in Figures 2, 3, and 5, and on the cupboard shown in Figure 61. The carving is, however, of a much higher order, and the grotesque figures seen on the bedstead we have never found on American pieces. This bedstead, with its heavy oak tester and headboard, also illustrates the development of the bedstead from an enclosed chamber. It dates in the last years of the sixteenth century.

This bedstead represents very well the carved oak bedsteads of the better class in use in England during the early seventeenth century, and there is no reason to doubt that some of the bedsteads inventoried at high figures in the colonial records were much like this one though far less elaborate. Thus at Yorktown, Virginia, in the estate of a Dr. McKenzie, who died in 1755, are mentioned "1 oak Marlbrough bedstead £8," and another of the same sort valued at £6, both of which are far above the usual valuation of bedsteads.

In New England records we find, from the first, in nearly every inventory mention of feather-beds, valued at from £2 to £3, a very high valuation, often equal to that of all the rest of the furniture put together. The probable reason is that all the early feather-beds were brought here by the settlers, for it could be hardly possible that such a quantity of feathers as these beds would require could have been taken so early from domestic chickens and geese. At Plymouth, in 1633, is mentioned "1 flock bed and old bolster £1 3s"—flock-beds being made of chopped rags; at Salem, in 1647, "a straw bed," and in 1673, "a canvas bed filled with cattails," and "a silk grass bed"; in 1654, "a hair bed"; and at New York, in 1676, "a chaff bed"; all of which items are repeatedly met with throughout the inventories both North and South, showing that almost any soft substance was utilized for the beds when feathers were not obtainable. In many instances these beds were probably placed on the floor, for in many inventories they are mentioned without any bedsteads whatever.

CARVED OAK BEDSTEAD, 1593.

(Figure 262.)

Many of the earliest bedsteads of which the records speak were doubtless merely frames on which to place the mattresses or beds; judging from the valuations, such frames may be referred to at Plymouth, in 1633, "1 old bedstead and form 2s"; at Yorktown, in 1667, "2 bedsteads, 2s"; one at 5s., and "one bedstead & buckrum teaster 6s"; at New York, in 1669, "2 bedsteads 16s"; at Philadelphia, in 1682, "1 bed bolster and bedstead £1"; at Providence, in 1670, "two bedsteads £1"; and in the inventory of John Sharp, taken at New York, in 1680, the following somewhat minute descriptions of the furnishings of the sleeping-rooms occur: "In the small room, a bedstead with a feather bed, bolster, a couple of blanketts, a rugg and an old pair of curtains and valins £5 3s"; in the middle room, "a bedstead with a feather bed and bolster, a rugg, a blankett, a little square table and a form £5 5s"; in the great room, "a bedstead with a feather bed, a bolster, 2 pillows, a blankett, a rugg, old hangings about the bed and old green hangings about the room and a carpett £6," while "a feather bed, bolster, blankett and coverlid" are inventoried separately as worth £3 10s., thus intimating that rather a small part of the total values can belong to the bedstead. We may also conclude that these simple bedsteads, whatever they were, were furnished with curtains and valances, which are mentioned with them almost without exception. In fact, throughout the inventories, with the exception of those of a few of the wealthier settlers, the values of bedsteads when given by themselves are surprisingly low. Again, we find throughout the Philadelphia records the expression "ordinary bedsteads," and these placed at valuations not exceeding 15s., and more often below 10s.; and, further, the bedsteads, in a large majority of inventories both North and South, are included with the beds and furnishings, usually mentioned last as of least importance.

On the other hand, we find occasional mention in wills of bedsteads in particular rooms left specifically, as property having special

value, and, as in the case of Mrs. Lake before-mentioned, some at least of the finer sort must have reached this country.

At Plymouth, in 1639, "A framed bedstead" is spoken of, and at Salem, in 1647, "A joyned bedstead." As "framed" and "joyned" are terms used to describe the wainscot chests and chairs, the bedsteads described in this way were probably something more than simply frames for drapery. Their valuations in these cases, however, 14s. and 16s., respectively, do not allow us to think that they were carved or ornamented in any pretentious way.

In 1643 a bedstead with tester, and in the same year a half-headed bedstead, are among the items. The word tester is derived from the old French word *testiere*, a kind of head-piece or helmet, and came to mean in English the frame for holding the canopy about a high-post bedstead. A tester or headed bedstead would therefore imply a high one, while a half-headed bedstead doubtless was one without the tester or head-piece and with low posts.

That some of the bedsteads were built bunk fashion into the walls is implied by the use of the term "standing bedstead," as though to distinguish them from those built in this way.

"Close bedsteads," "cupboard bedsteads," and "presse bedsteads" are also mentioned, and must have been arranged so that when not in use they could be folded into a cupboard in the wall, and probably hidden by doors. These are valued somewhat higher than the kinds already mentioned, averaging about 30s. A "presse bed" we find defined in Johnson's dictionary as "a bed so constructed that it may be folded and shut up in a case."

In the South the bedsteads during this period are more highly valued, as might be expected, for nearly all the furniture of Virginia and Maryland was imported from England, and was doubtless of the carved wainscot variety then prevalent in that country. At Yorktown, in 1647, is a record of "2 old bedsteads," which would indicate that they were imported, and, in 1657, another of "1 bedstead £3."

Although many of the bedsteads of the South were imported, yet we occasionally find in the inventories some which were made here, as, for instance, in 1659, "a Virginia-made bedstead" is mentioned.

After about 1660 the values of the bedsteads and furnishings are much higher, and those in the North and South became more nearly alike. At Boston, in 1660, one is valued at £24; at Richmond, Virginia, in 1678, one is valued at £24 5s.; at Plymouth, in 1682, the "best bedstead and furnishings" was £9; at New York, in 1691, "bed and furniture in the great room £24"; "one in the dinning room £18"; "one in the lodging room £15"; and "four others £36"; at Boston, in 1696, two very handsome bedsteads and furnishings were valued at £70 and £100 respectively; but, of course, it is impossible to tell what was the value of the bedstead and what that of the furnishings, which were often extremely valuable.

Such bedsteads as these might easily have been of the handsome carved oak kind shown in Figure 262, for when we consider the fact that the prevailing style for all other kinds of furniture during this time was the wainscot carved or the panelled style, and that the bedsteads in England during this time were of that same type, there is every reason to believe that the finer bedsteads in this country were of this same variety.

It has never been the writer's good fortune to find an example of a bedstead which, with any certainty, could be assigned to the seventeenth century, and such pieces seem totally to have disappeared. There are probably two reasons for this. First, as we have before suggested, the large portion of bedsteads were simple frames for holding drapery, and not in themselves worth preserving; and, second, in the South, where there must have been some of the handsomely carved oak bedsteads, there seems to be a complete dearth of seventeenth-century pieces, due to the devastation of two wars and the wealth of many of the people enabling them to replace the old-fashioned with the new, thus relegating the heavy oak furniture,

which, in the light of the radically different fashion which replaced it, was probably considered very unsightly, to the cabins of the slaves, where it was broken up or otherwise destroyed.

In New England, where practically all the examples of seventeenth-century furniture now known have been found, the less extravagant habits of the people caused them to be more conservative; but, notwithstanding this, most of the fine chests, cupboards, etc., recently unearthed have been found in attics, woodsheds, or barns, partly destroyed, and nearly always painted and maltreated in every way. Cupboards, tables, and chairs could for a while serve their useful purposes in kitchen or woodshed, but a bedstead, when discarded, could not be utilized for any useful purpose, and was, consequently, destroyed.

Miss Helen Evertson Smith, author of "Colonial Days and Ways," informs us that she remembers, many years ago, going to the home of the widow of Peter G. Stuyvesant, at the corner of Eleventh Street and Second Avenue, New York City, and seeing there a state bedstead with elegant hangings which was said to have belonged to Governor Stuyvesant, and on the third floor a bedstead which she describes as follows:

"Another bedstead, not so beautiful as this one, but more plentifully (if not so finely) carved, stood dismantled in a rear third-story room, and had, apparently, been intended to fit into an alcove, as all the carving was on one side. A pair of carved and panelled doors opened beneath the high bed-place. The closet thus formed may have been used for bedding. The place for the beds was a sort of box deep enough to have held three or four mattresses or feather-beds, laid, without the intervention of anything to answer the purpose of springs, directly upon the age-darkened boards. At each corner rose a carved post from six to seven inches in diameter, as I now guess. The two front posts were square as far as they formed the ends of the closet beneath the bed, and round as they rose above this

till they merged into a carved cornice of over a foot in depth. The two rear posts were halves laid flat against a heavily panelled rear wall."

This would seem to have been a handsome cupboard-bedstead, but the writer has been unable to locate it or to find whether it is still in existence. These cupboard-bedsteads we find frequently mentioned throughout the inventories, which would indicate that they were popular, probably because, being built into an alcove, they took up but little room; and this would also account for the fact that they have so

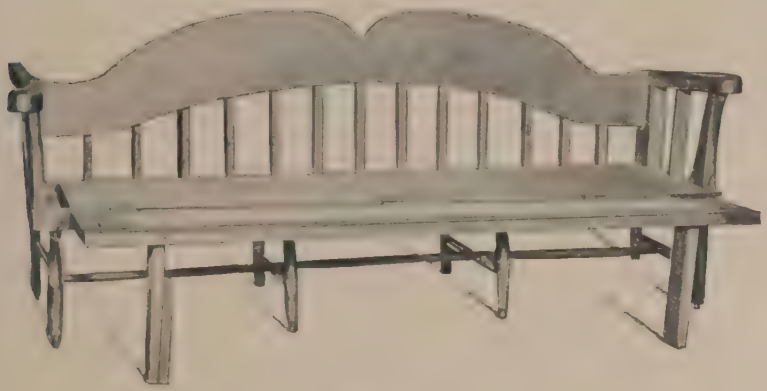


Figure 263.
Couch-bedstead, seventeenth century.

entirely disappeared, for, being built for a particular room, they would have been of little use elsewhere, and when families moved or remodelled their houses these bedsteads would have been destroyed.

Couch-bedsteads are mentioned occasionally in the Northern inventories, and very frequently in the South; in fact, there is hardly a Southern inventory of any size during the first hundred years which does not mention at least one couch-bedstead. These were, as their name indicates, couches which could be utilized for sleeping purposes.

The back and seat of a crudely hewn oak couch-bedstead, which belongs to Mr. Charles Morson, of Brooklyn, is shown in Figure 263. The original legs and bracing are missing, and the light legs and

stretchers which have been supplied are quite out of keeping with the massive effect of the back and arms. The original legs and bracing were undoubtedly square and heavy, after the fashion of the wainscot chair. The seat, which is a frame over which heavy canvas

Figure 264.

Cradle, sixteenth century.

is stretched, is arranged to fold one section on the other, with the legs fitting into grooves, exactly as in the modern sofa-bed.

As several cradles dating before 1700 have been found in this country, we will briefly describe them here before proceeding further with the discussion of bedsteads.

There were apparently two styles of cradles, one swinging between uprights, which stood firm on the floor, the other swinging on

short rockers; but, so far as this country is concerned, the former style, though antedating the latter in Europe, does not seem to have appeared here until much later.

Figure 264 is an example of one of the latter style made of oak, the top and side of the hood made with turned spindles, much after the fashion of Elder Brewster's chair, shown in Figure 85. This turned style is extremely old, and we have found such pieces illus-

Figure 265.

Wicker Cradle, early seventeenth century.

trated as early as the fifteenth century. This particular cradle is the finest that has come under our observation in this country, and is probably late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It is now at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, in a glass case.

Another cradle at the same place is shown in Figure 265. This piece, it will be seen, is made of wicker, and tradition says that it came over in the Mayflower and was used for Peregrine White. The fact that it is made of wicker can easily be explained by the fact that the Pilgrims came from Holland, which at that time was engaged in the India trade, and this piece was undoubtedly of Eastern origin.

What has been said with reference to definite knowledge of bedsteads before 1700 is also to a certain extent true of those after 1700. The bedsteads, when mentioned separate from the bedding and furnishings, rarely exceed a pound in value, and this is probably due to the fact that they continued to be perfectly plain. That this is true seems to be indicated by an examination of the well-known bedstead at Mount Vernon in which Washington died. He was a man of ample means, and his furniture in general was of the best; yet the bedstead has perfectly plain turned posts, and could easily have been valued at less than a pound.

We find at Philadelphia, in 1709, "a black walnut bedstead £1"; at Providence, in 1726, "2 bedsteads 10s," and in the same inventory, "1 bedstead and bedding £13"; and in 1734, "14 new bedsteads £14." Occasionally a will throws a little light on the subject, as in the case of the will of Thomas Meriwether, of South Farnham Parish, Essex County, Virginia, February 10, 1708: "I give my dear and loving wife Susanna my best new bed and furniture and the set of chairs belonging to it. The whole sute of Japan." At Providence, in an inventory of 1730, appears "a feather bed & pannoled bedstead £10," which probably was an oak bedstead of an earlier date.

The bedsteads of the eighteenth century, after the oak style had disappeared, were usually made of mahogany, maple, cherry, or Virginia walnut, and the posts were much more slender than those which belong to the Empire period. After 1740, when the ball-and-claw foot was used extensively, bedsteads were made with slender plain or fluted posts and cabriole legs, with the shell at the knee, finished with the ball-and-claw on all four feet, and sometimes only on the lower ones, in which case the two upper ones were straight and plain. This fashion, with little variation, was favored for a long period, probably until late in the century, thus making it impossible to date bedsteads of this kind definitely.

Figure 266 shows a bedstead belonging to Mr. Meggat, which

Figure 266.
Mahogany Bedstead, about 1750.

may have been of an early date, as indicated by the slender turned posts. The tester is built on a curve, and set on posts much lower than those which support flat-top testers.

The bedposts designed by Chippendale were tall and slender, his favorite design being a fluted column with garlands of flowers or ribbons entwining the posts in raised carving. He shows no ball-and-claw-foot bedsteads in his book of designs, but, as in the case of chairs, he probably made them. Some of these bedsteads came to

Figure 267.

Draped Bedstead, late eighteenth century.

this country, but are now very difficult to find. The writer has heard of one which a collector tells him he saw at an auction in a country town of Connecticut many years ago, but because covered with green paint, and being then ignorant of the possibilities of restoration, he did not bid, and it was sold for a song.

Figure 267, one of the bedsteads now preserved at Mount Vernon, illustrates admirably how completely the drapery covered the frame and posts of the bedstead, thus making any elaboration of

Figure 268.

Mahogany Bedstead, Ball-and-claw Feet, 1770–80.

the posts quite unnecessary, and the elegant appearance of the bed was made to depend upon the draperies.

Figure 268 shows part of a very graceful bedstead belonging to Mrs. Alexander Forman, of Brooklyn. The posts, with their slender fluting and carved drapery, forcibly suggest posts shown among Hepplewhite's designs; but the four ball-and-claw feet, which are without doubt original, show a variation Hepplewhite was not likely to use. The ball-and-claw feet are at the end of straight legs instead of cabriole legs, a method of construction which can hardly be approved, for a straight leg does not harmonize with a ball-and-claw foot; however, in some of the most beautiful designs for chairs by Ince this method is employed, but conventionalized in such a way as to make a most pleasing effect.

Figure 269.
Examples of Empire Bedposts, 1810–20.

The heavily carved mahogany bedsteads, ornamented principally in designs of acanthus-leaves and pineapples, with both high and low posts, came into use about 1800–20, when furniture of similar style and design was generally adopted. There have been called to the writer's notice a number of high-post bedsteads of this description which have associated with them traditions of use, during the Revolution, by either Washington or Lafayette. This seems very improbable, for absolutely no other furniture in this style was at all known previous to 1800, and there is no reason to believe that bedsteads were radically different from the other furniture of their time.

Figure 269 shows four posts in the familiar styles of the Empire high bedsteads, the first and last ornamented with acanthus-leaves and pineapples, the second a slender turned post similar to those long in use, which continued to be used as long as high-post bedsteads remained in fashion.

Figure 271.

Low-post Bedstead, 1810–20.

The headboards belonging to these bedsteads were often handsomely carved with drapery, flowers, fruit, and sometimes with a spread eagle; and while, as a rule, no footboard is used, this is not invariably the case. The drapery of beds which were handsomely carved was much lighter than that previously employed, and arranged to display both the posts and headboard.

Figure 270 shows a portion of an Empire bedstead found in Virginia, belonging to the writer, which represents the finer bed-

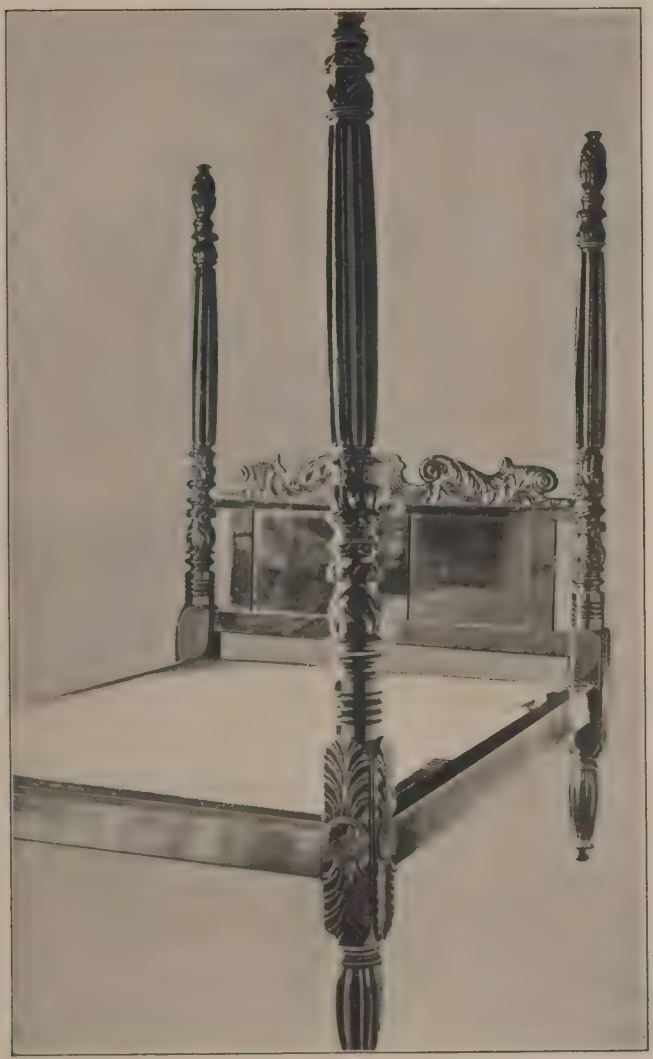


Figure 270.

Empire Bedstead, about 1810.

steads of its kind. The mahogany is very finely grained, and the carving, though not fine, is good. The posts measure 7 feet 11 inches in height and 14 inches in circumference. The bolt-holes are covered

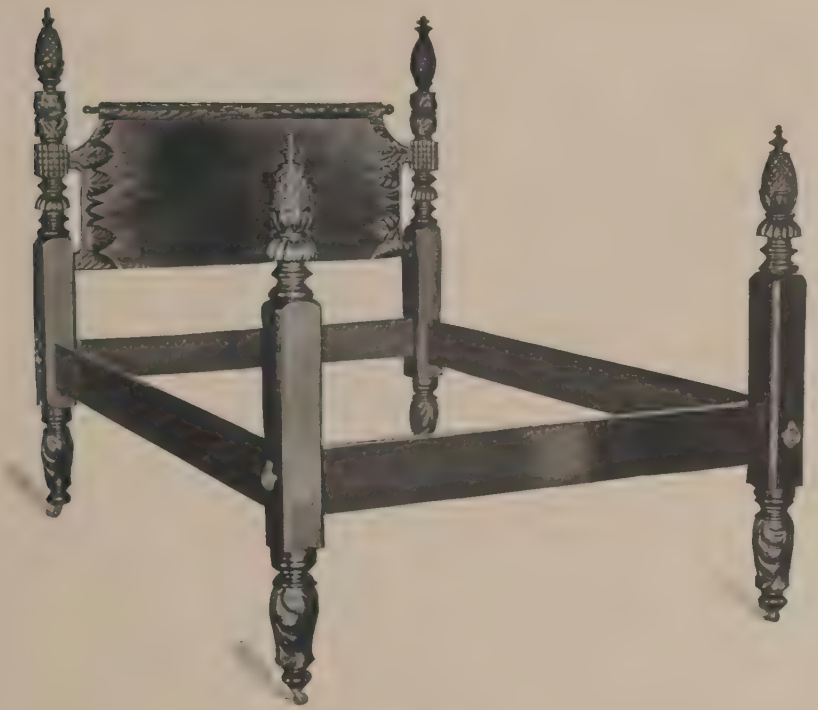


Figure 272.

Low-post Bedstead, 1820–30.

by carved panels, which are cleverly held in place by means of wooden blocks which slide into grooves.

Two low-post bedsteads with characteristic Empire decorations, which belong to Mr. Meggat, are shown in Figures 271 and 272. The ball-and-claw feet on Figure 271 are probably not original, as they do not harmonize with the style in which the bed is made. The pineapple terminals shown in Figure 272 were very frequently used,

and are sometimes the only carving employed, the rest of the posts being simply turned.

From 1820 to 1840 great numbers of low-post bedsteads in maple and cherry, with simple turned posts, and with a headboard finished with a heavy row of moulding, were in use throughout New England.

Figure 273.

French Bedstead, about 1830.

The French Empire bedsteads, with rolling head- and footboard, were popular here about 1830, and remained in fashion until replaced by the black-walnut machine-made bedsteads. The handsomest of these French bedsteads were ornamented with ormolu, but as a rule they were massive and plain.

A simple bedstead in this style, which belongs to Mr. Casper Sommerlad, of Brooklyn, is shown in Figure 273. The side rails are narrower than usual, and the feet are turned instead of being a continuation of the side.

XI

CLOCKS

WE do not consider that clocks technically should be classified as furniture, and still, as there is hardly a collector who does not possess at least one specimen, we think it may be well to give a brief sketch of the subject, having reference more especially to such pieces as have been in the country from colonial times, confining ourselves to clocks in household use, and not speaking of the early clocks in various towers and churches. It is not our intention, in the limited space that can be given to the subject in a general book on colonial furniture, to state more than the leading points which one should know to enable him to buy intelligently, and we would refer the reader for fuller description and information to the excellent books heretofore published exclusively on this subject.

This country was just being settled when the Clock-makers' Company was founded in London, in 1631. This company had for its object the regulation of the clock trade, and in order to prevent persons from being cheated or deceived by unskilled makers, the members were given the right of search and confiscation of clocks and watches which had "bad and deceitful works." This company seems particularly to have directed its energies against the Dutch, in whose ability as clock-makers, whether merited or not, the English had little confidence.

The most important work which this company accomplished was the training of men for the art. There was a carefully arranged apprenticeship, and after serving his turn each apprentice had to make his masterpiece before he was admitted as a workmaster; and therefore the possessor of a clock bearing the name of a member of the guild may rest assured that the piece is at least well made.

At the time our history begins there were two general styles of clocks in use, one which was run with weights, and the other with a spiral spring. The former variety was the older, although, so far as this country is concerned, it was contemporaneous and of necessity was a stationary clock, while the latter was easily carried about and was often called a portable or table clock.

Clocks are seldom mentioned in any of the records in this country prior to 1700, and were always valued at a fairly high price—the lowest 6s., and the highest £20. Descriptions are seldom given, so it is largely a matter of surmise in what style the earliest clocks were.

Thus at Boston, in 1638, we find "1 clock 18s"; in 1652, "1 brass clock £2," and again "one clock in case £6"; at Salem, in 1660, a clock valued at £2; at New York, in 1689, "one Pendula Clock £6"; and at Boston, in the inventory of Sir William Phips, a very wealthy man, we find, in 1696, a clock valued at £20 and a repeating clock at £10; at New York, in 1691, we find a "diamond watch" mentioned without valuation given, which shows a luxury quite up-to-date.

The earliest clock mentioned, in 1638, could have been either a lantern clock, described below, or a portable clock; but as the inventories several times refer to brass clocks when describing the lantern variety, the one mentioned in 1638 was probably a portable one after the fashion of the one shown in Figure 274.

This style of clock came into use about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and this particular clock was made by Jonathan

Loundes, a famous clock-maker of Pall Mall, London, who was admitted to the Clock-makers' Company in 1680. It will be seen that the face has the oval top. This style was introduced by Tompion, who died in 1713, and only appears on his later clocks. The style, however, became very popular in the reign of George I, which began in 1714, and we should place the date of the clock somewhere between 1710 and 1720. The face has not the applied spandrels in the corner,

Figure 274.
Portable or Table Clock, 1710–20.

Figure 275.
Portable or Table Clock, last quarter eighteenth century.

as is usual, but is engraved with an urn at the top, and oval figures surrounded with wreaths in the four corners. The case is in the typical style of the portable clock, and is japanned. It belongs to the Long Island Historical Society.

Figure 275 is another clock in the same style, made by Isaac Fox, of London, who was admitted to the Clock-makers' Company in 1772, and is given to show how little the style changed during a long period. It belongs to Mr. Meggat.

The clock next found in the inventories is in 1652 — "1 brass clock

£2." This undoubtedly refers to such a clock as is shown in Figure 276.

Such clocks are known by the following names: "chamber," "lantern," "bird-cage," and "bedpost"; all but the last name probably referring to its shape, and the last referring either to its shape or to its being at times fastened to the bedposts; for, as they were often fitted with an alarm attachment, they must have been designed for sleeping-rooms as well as other parts of the house. This style of clock came into existence in England about the year 1600. These clocks were set upon brackets, as shown in this illustration, with weights hanging below, and were wound up by pulling down the opposite end of the cord holding the weights. The face was usually a little larger than the rest, and the centre of the dial was often beautifully etched. The bell at the top was sometimes used for an alarm only, and sometimes to strike the hour as well.

Figure 276.

Chamber or Lantern Clock, 1600–40.

The earliest clocks had no pendulum, but a balance controlled the movement, and about the middle of the seventeenth century the pendulum came into use. The original pendulum was short, about the length of the case, and as it swung would fly out at either side of the case, acquiring the name of "bob pendulum." It is some-

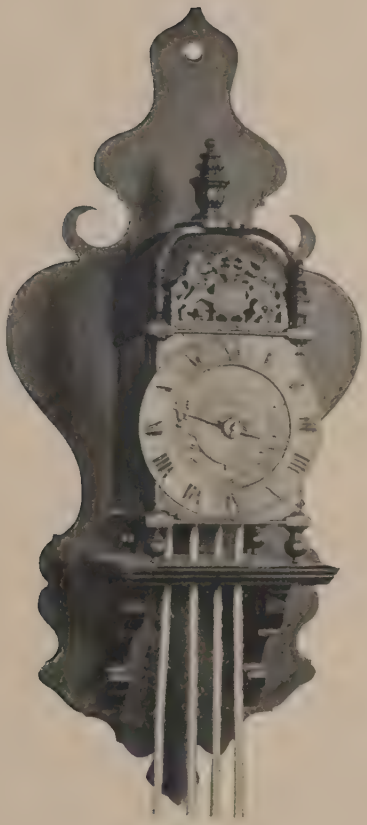


Figure 277.

Chamber or Lantern Clock, 1660–80.

times found hung outside the case, and sometimes inside, and when the latter is true little slits are cut in the case to allow the pendulum to swing out on each side. Such clocks run not longer than from twelve to thirty hours. It will be noticed that at the top, on three sides, is a fret, put there partially to conceal the large bell and give finish to the piece, and these frets will often enable one to determine the age of a clock. Many clock-makers had their own private frets, while others followed the design most popular at that time. The clocks also often have the maker's name engraved on the dial.

The fret on Figure 276 is called the "heraldic fret," and was used from 1600 to 1640, so that this clock is an extremely early one. The next pattern of fret most commonly found is the "dolphin fret," which appeared about 1650 and remained popular throughout the rest of the time this style of clock was fashionable; consequently it is the pattern most commonly met with. It consisted either of two dolphins with tails crossed, or two dolphins with heads together and tails forming a curve at either side.

Another fret which was used by Charles Fox, clock-maker, and possibly a few others between 1660 and 1680 is shown in Figure 277, and a still later pattern is shown in Figure 278.

To return to Figure 276, it is arranged for an alarm only, and does not strike the hours, the alarm being set by a centre dial. It will be noted that in nearly all of these clocks there is but a single hand, telling the hour and fifths of hours. The maker's name does not appear on this clock; it was found at Salem, Massachusetts.

Figure 277 is a more pretentious clock. It both strikes the hour and has the alarm, which is set in the same way as in the preceding clock, and the dial is very handsomely engraved. The upper side of the inner dial has the following inscription: "Charles Fox at the Fox Lothbury, Londini Fecit." Charles Fox was admitted to the Clock-makers' Company in 1660. This clock was found in New

Jersey, and it and the preceding one belong to Mr. Meggat. It is more compact than Figure 276, but its dimensions are about the same: 15 inches high by 5¾ inches wide, and the dial is 6¼ inches in diameter.

Figure 278.

Chamber or Lantern Clock, last quarter seventeenth century.

Figure 278 shows another clock of this same style, also in the possession of Mr. Meggat. It is very much smaller than the two others shown, being but 9 inches in height and 3¾ inches wide, and the dial is 4¼ inches in diameter. It still has its original bob pendulum, which can be seen in the illustration hanging in the middle between its four legs. It also has a minute-hand. This clock strikes, but has no alarm, and seems to be of French make.

Figures 276 and 277 have had the long pendulum substituted for the bob pendulum, probably because they would thus keep better time. It was the fashion, during the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, to have this change made, and many advertisements are to be found of clock-makers who advertise to substitute long pendulums for short ones at reasonable charges.

The long or royal pendulum is supposed to have been invented by Richard Harris at London in 1641; but it found little favor at first, and the date when it came into common use is usually placed at 1680. It was also invented on the Continent at about the same time, apparently without knowledge of Harris's invention, and it is probable that some of those found their way to this country before 1680.

Figure 279 shows a Dutch bracket clock owned by Mr. Charles

Morson, of Brooklyn. The face and ornaments are made of lead, the ornaments gilded, and the face painted. The feet are of wood, and in the usual Dutch ball-foot style. It has a bob pendulum, and the works are of brass. It differs from the brass clocks above described in that the top of the clock is protected by a wooden hood. A characteristic of the brackets of these clocks is the mermaid cut out of the wood on either side of the back. Such clocks are contemporaneous with the English brass chamber clocks, but are very inferior in workmanship, and, we believe, are such as the Clockmakers' Company sought to suppress.

Figure 279.

Dutch Chamber Clock, seventeenth century.

The development from the brass chamber or lantern clock to the tall or "grandfather's" was a natural one. First, a wooden hood was placed over the brass clock for protection, and when the long pendulum came into fashion it had to be enclosed to keep it from injury, the result being a clock with a long case.

The earliest long-case clocks, as well as any seventeenth-century clocks, are extremely scarce.

The inventory at Boston, "1 clock and case £6," in 1652, would be an extremely early entry for a tall clock, although the high price would indicate that it was such; but there can be no doubt about the entry in New York, in 1689, "one Pendulum Clock £6," referring to the tall-case clock.

The earliest clock-cases were very plain, made mostly of oak or walnut, the finer ones being almost entirely of the latter wood; and on the dial-face of the earlier ones the maker's name appears under the dial in Latin; a little later the name appeared on the dial between the figures VII and V within the circle, and about 1715 the name-plate appeared.

At first the dials were square, but they later (about 1710) were made with the straight top broken by a half-circle, suggested either by the dome bell on the chamber clock, or more probably to cover the top of the bell; and many of the old clock-faces were made over in this way when the fashion changed.

As with the chamber clock the date could be told somewhat by the fret, so in the tall clock an approximation can be made by observing the spandrels or corner ornaments on the face. The earliest faces have a cherub's head, almost perfectly plain, in the four corners, which continued in use as late as 1700. This was followed by cherubs a little more ornate, going out of style about the same time. Then, about the year 1700, came two cupids supporting a crown (see Figure 282), which, in its simple or more elaborate form, continued to be used until about 1740, and in George III's reign the pattern became very intricate, sometimes with an Indian or some other head in the centre of a mass of scrollwork, sometimes without the head. (See Figure 285.)

It is impossible to tell the age of a clock by its case, as very often the works were brought over here without the case, or, as during the Revolutionary War, the works were taken out and hidden and the case left to be destroyed. Nor can one always judge by the face, as old faces have sometimes been discarded for newer styles. Nor can one always tell from the name-plate, for the writer knows of at least one instance where the name-plate had been removed and that of a clock-maker who made repairs substituted. It is really only by taking into consideration all the points heretofore discussed that one can come to an approximation of the age of a clock.

Figure 280.

Tall Clock, about 1700.

Figure 280 shows one of the earliest tall clocks which we have found in this country. It is owned by the Philadelphia Library, and is said to have belonged to Oliver Cromwell; but this tradition cannot be true. It probably dates about 1690–1700. The name of the maker appears below the dial in Latin, "Johannes Fromanteel, Londini fecit," which, as we have seen, is an indication of its age. This John Fromanteel was a member of an illustrious family of clock-makers who are mentioned as early as 1630. One of them is spoken of by Evelyn as "our famous Fromantel," and they were undoubtedly at the head of their profession. This John was not admitted to the Clock-makers' Company until 1663, and for that reason we have said that this clock could not have belonged to Oliver Cromwell, who had died before that date, and it is hardly likely that he would have owned a clock made by an apprentice not yet admitted to the guild.

The dial of this clock is silvered and the rest of the face is of brass, without spandrels at the corners, and we can see no signs of there ever having been any, although on some of his clocks are to be found the early cherub-head spandrels. There was originally, no doubt, but a single hand, and the clock has a small calendar attachment. The case is made of walnut, and very tall, to make room for the pendulum. These pendulums were sometimes seven feet long. The early single moulding is seen about the doors, and the spiral-turned columns are typical of the early clock-cases. As to whether the broken arch at the top is of the same age as the rest of the case it is very difficult to tell; in fact, the whole question of the age of the broken arch, as we have seen in the chapter on Chests of Drawers, is very difficult to solve we believe, however, that it could have been original on this clock, as we have seen them on clocks dating about 1700.

Figure 281 shows another early clock. The case is made of pine or some other soft wood, and the band of carving at the top is early in design. This clock-case also has the single-arch moulding

about the doors, and there is an opening in the lower door to show the swinging of the pendulum. It is at the Van Cortlandt Mansion, Van Cortlandt Park, New York.

Figure 282 shows a detail of the face of the foregoing clock which is worth noting. It will be seen that the spandrels are of the

Figure 281.
Tall Clock, about 1700–10.

Figure 282.
Dial of Clock shown in Figure 281.

third order,—cupids holding a crown,—which came into fashion about 1700. The maker's name, Walter Archer, appears between the numerals VII and V, which shows it to date probably before 1715. We have been unable to find this maker's name among the members of the Clock-makers' Company or elsewhere, and this would seem to indicate that he was probably from one of the smaller towns in England or a colonial maker. The clock is dated 1619, and an examination with the eye failed to detect that the date was

engraved at a later date than the rest of the face; but the photograph very readily shows it to be of a different depth, and it was without doubt added at a rather recent date. The fact that pendulum clocks were not invented until 1641 of itself would disprove the date, apart from the other indications above referred to, which lead us to date it 1700–10.

Figure 283.

Dial of Tall Clock showing Arch Top, 1725–30.

It will readily be seen that the arched upper part of the dial, which came in a little later, was intended to cover the bell, which in this illustration shows at the top. This clock is wound by pulling up the weights by hand, as is the method in the bird-cage clocks above referred to.

Figure 283 shows a clock-face of a little later date, indicated by the curved top of the dial, and the name-plate, both of which came into vogue about 1715. The spandrels, however, are of the same kind as those shown in the last figure, and the name-plate follows the same design as the spandrels. It dates about 1725–30.

Figure 284.

Musical Clock, Chippendale Case, 1760–70.

Figure 285.

Dial of Clock shown in Figure 284.

From about 1730 down toward the close of the century there was very little change in the general style of the clocks. They were all either the tall "grandfather" or the portable clock.

Figure 284 shows a musical clock in a Chippendale case, belonging to Mr. Charles Morson, its chief difference from those heretofore described being that the lower part of the case is kettle shape.

Figure 285 shows a detail of the face of this clock. It will be seen that the late spandrels are in the two lower corners. This clock was made by Joseph Rose, of London, who, with his son, had a shop at 19 Foster Lane from 1765 to 1768. It will be seen that this is both a chime and a musical clock. The upper dial sets the musical part to play either a polonaise or a march. The dial to the left, as one faces it, regulates the strike, and that on the right the chime. Such clocks as these were not only imported to the colonies, but there were several clock-makers here who advertise to make them. In the Boston "Gazette" for February 22, 1773, the following advertisement appears: "Benjamin Willard" (first of the famous American clock-makers of that name) "at his shop in Roxbury Street pursues different branches of clock and watch work, has for sale musical clocks playing different tunes, a new tune every day of the week and on Sunday a psalm tune. These tunes perform every hour without any obstruction to the motion or going of the clock and new invention for pricking barrels to perform the music and his clocks are

Figure 286.
Burnap Clock, 1799.

made much cheaper than any ever yet known. All the branches of this business likewise carried on at his shop in Grafton."

Figure 286 illustrates a clock in the possession of Mrs. W. W. Andrews, made by Daniel Burnap, a well-known American clock-maker, who lived at Andover, Plymouth, and East Windsor, Connecticut, between 1780 and 1800, and this clock was bought in 1799. A characteristic of his clocks is the silvered face, usually beautifully engraved, without spandrels. This clock has both the calendar and moon phases, and the background for the moon phases is tinted blue. The works are always of brass, and this maker's clocks are always highly prized.

Figure 288.
French Clock of Alabaster, 1800–20.

Toward the close of the century there was great demand for cheaper clocks, due to the poverty of the young republic, just recovering from the Revolutionary War and an inflated currency. To meet this demand, about 1790, the painted or white-enamelled dials came in, taking the place, except in the expensive clocks, of the brass dial. These painted faces were made either of metal or wood, and large numbers were sold to clock-makers throughout the country, who added their names and placed the dials on works often not made by themselves. It was also at this time, and for much the same reason, that the wooden works began to be used. These wooden works usually had bone or some other hard substance for bearings, and there are still many to be found keeping good time.

Figure 287 shows a painted-face clock, in the possession of Mr.

Figure 287.

Tall Clock with Painted Face, about 1800.

Meggat. On its face appears the name of Jacob Sargent, of Springfield, Massachusetts, a locally well-known clock-maker of a hundred years ago. The works are of brass, and the case is of pine, painted.

These later tall clocks are sometimes found in miniature, from three to four feet tall, with the other proportions corresponding.

Figure 288 shows a clock in the Louis XVI style, belonging to Mr. L. A. Lockwood. It is made of alabaster, and the face and pendulum are of fire-gilt. Such clocks were intended to be kept under

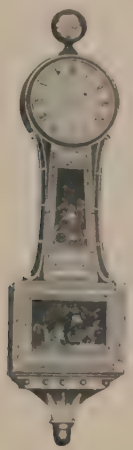


Figure 289.
Willard or Banjo Clock, 1800–20.

Figure 290.
Willard or Banjo Clock, 1800–20.

large glass globes, which fit into the grooves on the wooden frame, thus making it dust-proof. Many such clocks found their way to this country about 1800–20.

Such clocks, besides being made of alabaster, were often of black marble or wood painted black, with brass capitals at the tops of the columns. They were nearly always furnished with compensating pendulums, and were excellent timekeepers, often running sixteen days.

A form of clock known as "Willard" or "banjo" is shown in Figures 289 and 290. There seems to be a great deal of doubt as to

who made these clocks first, and they are generally credited to a clock-maker by the name Willard. Mr. Britton, in his book on "Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers," credits them to a J. Willard living in Boston in 1800; but we have been unable to find, either in the Boston directories or the genealogy of the Willard family, any clock-maker with that initial. The Willard family had been famous as clock-makers for several generations. There were three brothers: Benjamin, who had shops at Boston, Roxbury, and Grafton, and advertised the musical clocks already mentioned; Aaron, who had a shop in Boston early in the nineteenth century; and Simon, who made a specialty of tall eight-day clocks. The banjo clocks are, as a rule, without name, and it has proved difficult to determine which Willard was the maker. We know of banjo clocks bearing the name Willard or "Willard patent" stencilled on the case, and the clock shown in Figure 289 had originally the name "Willard, Jr.," printed on its face; and we know of one banjo clock bearing the name Simon Willard in the same lettering as appears on a tall clock by that maker owned by the same person. We are told by others that they have seen such clocks which they think bear the name A. Willard, but we have been unable to prove this. It therefore lies between Simon and Aaron, and, we believe, in favor of the former, for he had a son Simon, also a famous clock-maker, and this may account for the "Willard, Jr.," on the clock shown in Figure 289.

Figure 291.

Clock made by A. Willard, early nineteenth century.

On the other hand, a clock bearing the inscription "A. Willard, Boston," shown in Figure 291, and owned by the Misses Brown, of Salem, having been bought from Willard by their grandfather, although not banjo in shape, certainly suggests the banjo clock in its

painted case, and it seems possible that the man who made such a clock as this could also have made the banjo clock. The solution may be that Simon, Simon, Jr., and Aaron all made these clocks, as also did others, for we know of several clocks in the banjo shape which bear names of various clock-makers of Boston and elsewhere. We know definitely, however, that Simon Willard made these clocks, but whether the other Willards did is an open question.

Figure 292.

Mantel Clock, 1812.

In general shape the banjo clock resembles an English clock called "act of Parliament clock," which was made in the last years of the eighteenth century, and as it was within ten years of this that the banjo clock appeared, Willard may have used it for his model.

They are usually constructed very simply, having brass works, and running eight days, but having no strike. They were excellent timekeepers, and many are in use to-day, still keeping good time.

The clock shown in Figure 289 is an exception to the general

rule, as it has an alarm attachment. Both the foregoing banjo clocks belong to Mr. Meggat.

In 1812 the shelf or mantel clocks were invented, and because they could be sold for a small sum, and were better timekeepers than the cheaper tall clocks with wooden works, they soon took their place, and it is practically from 1812 that the decline of tall clocks can be said to date.

Figure 293.
Mantel Clock, 1820–30.

The first mantel clocks made in this country were made by Eli Terry, of Plymouth Hollow (now Thomaston), Connecticut. He was a clock-maker of considerable reputation, and so great was the demand for clocks at the beginning of the nineteenth century that in 1803 he made three thousand tall-clock movements. He then sold out to Calvin Hoadley and Seth Thomas, a well-known American clock-maker, and retired from business. The demand for cheaper clocks than could be made with the tall cases led him to experiment in making small clocks, and about the year 1812 he made six mantel clocks.

Figure 292 shows the first of these clocks. It was a very crude affair, and Terry never used it as a model, one of the other five subsequently being adopted for the working model of the later mantel clock, and therefore it has the honor of being the first made and the only one built from this design. It will be seen that it is nothing more or less than a tall-case clock cut down. The works are made of wood, and a weight is used for the running power in the same way as in the tall clocks. This clock was bought from Eli Terry by Ozias Goodwin, and is now in the possession of his great-grandson, J. C. Spencer, of Thomaston, Connecticut.

The model which was adopted for the later mantel clocks was

arranged with the pendulum and verge in front of the works behind the face, and was run with a spiral spring.

Figure 293 shows a shelf clock, belonging to the Hon. John R. Buck, which dates between 1820 and 1830, and is a good example of the style. It was quite often the custom to paste in the backs of these clocks a copy of the last census of the principal cities of the United States, and it is thus possible to approximate the year they were made.

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